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THE

DESPATCHES

OF

HERNANDO CORTES,

THE CONQUEROR OF MEXICO,

ADDRESSED TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

WRITTEN DURING THE CONQUEST,

AND CONTAINING A NARRATIVE OF ITS EVENTS.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH,

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY GEORGE FOLSOM,

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, OF THE ARCHAIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF ATHENS, &c., &c.

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PREFACE.

THIS stirring narrative of toil and adventure, addressed by the celebrated conqueror of Mexico to his sovereign, although replete with the most romantic interest, has hitherto escaped an English translator. Written amidst the very scenes described, in a tone of honest sincerity, and with a scrupulous attention to the truth, which none has ever attempted to gainsay, these Letters or Despatches, after being published separately as they were received in Spain, seem to have been overlooked and forgotten when in the lapse of time the original editions had disappeared from the public eye. Even Antonio de Solis, historiographer to his Catholic Majesty, whose classical and popular work on the Conquest of Mexico appeared in 1684, confesses that he was beholden to an Italian translation for his knowledge of one of them.* Indeed, they seem not to have been republished in Spain until 1749, when they were inserted in Barcia's collection of *Historiadores Primitivos*, or Early Historians. Afterwards, in 1770, another edition appeared at the city of Mexico, superintended by Archbishop, since Cardinal Lorenzana, who enriched it with copious notes; and this, together with a biographical sketch of Cortes originally written in English by the late R. C. Sands, was re-printed in 1828, at New-York, for the Mexican market. The present translation has been made from the Archbishop's Mexican edition, many of whose notes have been retained, which are marked with the initial of his name.

The First Letter appears not to have been printed; at least, no trace of it has been found, either in print, or manuscript, in Spain, or in Germany; and we are therefore compelled to begin with the Second, and to give the previous events in an Introduction.

* Mr. Rich, of London, in his Catalogue of books relating to America, mentions a copy of the original edition of the Third Letter of Cortes as being in his possession, the price of which is marked at the high price of 10*l.* 10*s.* or about *fifty-two* Spanish dollars, on account of its very great rarity.

12524

The Second Letter was printed at Seville, in 1522; of which a Latin translation appeared at Nuremberg in March, 1524; this again was turned into Italian, and published at Venice in August of the same year.*

The Third Letter was printed at Seville, in 1523; translated into Latin by the same hand, and published at Nuremberg the following year.†

The Fourth Letter was printed at Toledo in 1525; and together with the two former appeared in the third volume of Ramusio's collection of Voyages and Travels, (in Italian,) at Venice, 1556. This was the edition consulted by Solis, as mentioned above.

A German translation of them was printed at Augsburg, in 1550, and another at Heidelberg, in 1779.

A French translation, by M. Le Vicomte de Flavigny, appeared at Paris in 1776. This was made from the edition of Archbishop Lorenzana, as appears from the preface of the noble translator, in which he says—"I present to the public a precious *morceau* of literature and history, edited in 1770, with the utmost care, by the present Archbishop of Toledo, formerly Archbishop of Mexico. From the time of Cæsar to the sixteenth century, Cortes is the only great captain who has related his own exploits. Although the conqueror of the Gauls had the advantage both in regard to the character of his enemies, and in point of style, Cortes will nevertheless appear worthy of his high reputation. His prudence, his courage, his enlarged views, his resources, and even his prejudices, and those of the age, which he treated with respect, will ever illustrate the period in which he lived, and the astonishing revolution effected by his arms. At the same time, as long as the simple and frank tone of a modest but undoubted hero affords pleasure, so long will these letters be read with delight by posterity, and afford instructive lessons to mankind."

The translation of Flavigny has no other fault than its freedom, or in other words, its abridgement of the original; sometimes almost an

* A copy of this Italian edition was presented a few years since to the New-York Historical Society, by Samuel Ward, Esq.; it purports to have been made from the Latin of "Il Dottore Pietro Savorgnano," secretary to the bishop of Vienna; the name of the Italian translator was Nicolo Liburnio.

† A copy of the Latin translation of the second and third Letters by Dr. Savorgnano, printed at Cologne in 1532, belongs to the Philadelphia Library; for the use of which the writer is indebted to the courtesy of the Librarian of that institution.

entire page being condensed into three or four lines. This is shown by the following comparison :—

Flavigny's Translation.

L'eau douce parvient à Mexico par deux tuyaux de deux pieds de circonférence chacun, et qui sont placés le long de l'une des chaussées, par lesquelles on aborde en cette ville; cette eau se distribue le long des rues dans différens canots, pour être ensuite vendue au public.—p. 100.

Re-translation of the French.

Fresh water is conveyed to Mexico by means of two pipes, each two feet in circumference, which extend along one of the causeways leading to the city. This water is carried through the streets in canoes and sold to the people.—Portfolio, vol. iv. p. 289.

The original literally translated:

Along one of the causeways that lead into the city are laid two pipes, constructed of masonry, each of which is two paces in width, and about five feet in height. An abundant supply of excellent water, forming a volume equal in bulk to the human body, is conveyed by one of these pipes, and distributed about the city, where it is used by the inhabitants for drinking and other purposes. The other pipe, in the mean time, is kept empty until the former requires to be cleansed, when the water is let into it and continues to be used till the cleansing is finished. As the water is necessarily carried over bridges on account of the salt water crossing its route, reservoirs resembling canals are constructed on the bridges, through which the fresh water is conveyed. These reservoirs are of the breadth of the body of an ox, and of the same length as the bridges. The whole city is thus served with water, which they carry in canoes through all the streets for sale, taking it from the aqueduct in the following manner: the canoes pass under the bridges on which the reservoirs are placed, when men stationed above fill them with water, for which service they are paid.

See below, pp. 118–9.

This is a paraphrase rather than a translation, and leaves room for a new French version, which it is understood a distinguished author at Paris will shortly publish.

In this connexion it is proper that we should notice a translation of the Second Letter, made with great fidelity from the French of Vicomte Flavigny, and published in the Portfolio, (a well known magazine, formerly printed at Philadelphia,) in 1817–18. The editor informs his readers that this paper was found amongst the manuscripts of the late Mr. Alsop, of Middletown, Conn., who seems not to have been in possession of a copy of the original work. This gentleman, besides numerous other contributions to the literature of the day, published an excellent translation of the Abbé Molina's History of Chili, from the Italian.

The Vicomte Flavigny states in his preface, that he had not only taken no pains to acquire new information respecting the conquest of Mexico, but, on the contrary, had endeavored to forget the little knowledge he had on that subject; "for," he adds, "it was not Solis, Herrera, Diaz, or Gomara, that I designed to translate, nor did I propose to imitate the Abbé Prevost, the Abbé Raynal, or even Robertson." We have ventured, however, to adopt a different course, and although determined to give a faithful version of the conqueror's own language, have at the same time consulted every writer within our reach who throws any light on the events of the conquest. Amongst these should be distinguished as surpassing all others, being contemporary with Cortes, Bernal Diaz del Castillo and Francisco Lopez de Gomara; the former himself a soldier in the expedition, who resided in his old age at the city of Guatemala, where, nearly fifty years after the conquest, he composed his history, which was discovered in manuscript after his death, and printed for the first time in 1632. This work is tinged with the personal prejudices of the writer, but in the main deserves great credit for its frank and impartial character. Having been early translated into English, it has passed through many editions, both in England and America.*

Gomara, whose Chronicle of New Spain was published a few years after the death of Cortes, had been the chaplain of the conqueror, and enjoyed the best opportunities for collecting the materials of his work. It was well written, and for many years ranked as the ablest and most authentic book on the history of New Spain. But the subsequent appearance of the "True History" of Bernal Diaz, (who

*Gen. Thompson, the present U. S. Minister at Mexico, is understood to have in hand a new translation of Bernal Diaz, the present one being quite incomplete.

charged him with neglecting the achievements of the companions of Cortes in order to exalt the merits of their commander,) together with the imputations of Herrera, the royal historiographer, and finally, the publication of the popular volumes of Antonio de Solis, threw Gomara into the shade, and caused his labors to be neglected. But whoever consults his pages will find them well stored with facts, carefully arranged and clearly stated. In short, it is an able and substantial work, and possesses as strong claims to be deemed impartial in its tone as any other, not excepting Herrera himself.*

It would be unpardonable to omit to mention in this connexion the admirable modern work of Clavigero, a Jesuit father, who on the abolition of his order in the Spanish dominions, after passing more than forty years of his life in Mexico, took refuge in Italy, where he devoted his leisure to literary pursuits. Being familiar with the native language of Mexico, he carefully studied its antiquities and history, and composed the best and most authentic book on these subjects that had appeared. It was written in the Italian language, and has been ably translated into English by Charles Cullen, Esq.

The Despatches of Cortes were written under circumstances the most unfavorable to precision of style, and at a period when the languages of modern Europe were far from being what they now are; for these reasons it is not to be disguised, that they have presented occasional difficulties in the translation, which, with all our helps, it has required a considerable degree of labor to surmount. This attempt is, therefore, commended to the indulgence of the public, as a well-meant effort to contribute to the amusement and edification of those English and American readers who have not the leisure or inclination to consult the original.

New-York, August 1*st*, 1843.

* There is an imperfect English translation of Gomara under the title of "*The Pleasante Historie of the Conquest of the West India*," &c., of which two editions were published in black letter, viz. 1578 and 1596. Many entire chapters of the original are, however, omitted, and numerous alterations made *ad libitum* by the translator.

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INTRODUCTION.

The conquest of Mexico by Hernando Cortes, at the head of a few hundred Spaniards, forms one of those romantic episodes in history that give color to the saying, that "truth is stranger than fiction." Whether we regard the temerity of the undertaking, of which a signal example is afforded in the voluntary destruction of the ships that had conveyed the conquerors to the Mexican coast, for the purpose of cutting off all hope of retreat; or the chivalric spirit with which they met the perils that surrounded them at every step of their progress, or the brilliant results that finally crowned their exertions, this enterprise in point of strange and wonderful adventure, and we may add of high military achievement, is wholly without a parallel in ancient or modern times. Like all conquests in war, it was doubtless stained by acts of gross injustice and cruelty towards the conquered, for which no substantial justification can be alleged. Some palliation may be sought, however, in the spirit of the age, which not only excused but commended the summary destruction of the enemies of the Christian faith wherever they might be found. This spirit formed a deep infusion in the character of the Spanish hidalgos who were engaged in the discovery of the Indies, (as the New World was then styled,) of which Columbus himself was a memorable example; and the reader of the following despatches from the conqueror of Mexico to his sovereign, will be struck by the religious feeling every where displayed, which gives to his expedition quite as much the air of a crusade against infidel pagans, as of an attempt to enlarge the dominions and increase the wealth of his Catholic Majesty. The sincerity of Cortes in these professions of zeal for the spread of the "true faith," is

fully attested by the boldness with which he attacked and subverted the idolatrous practices of the Mexicans, often under circumstances of great risk and danger. He never temporized with the superstitions of the natives, and the conquest effected as complete a revolution in the religious as the civil institutions of the country. Every vestige of the ancient idolatry was carefully erased, and the entire population of the country brought, nominally at least, into the Christian fold.* Thus carrying the emblem of the cross in one hand, and the sword in the other, Cortes punished (as he expressed it) with the utmost rigor all who refused to recognize him in the double capacity of propagator of the Catholic faith, and vicegerent of the lawful sovereign of those parts. But it must be admitted that, in general, his treatment of the Indians was mild and conciliatory, as abundantly appears in the following pages, which are uncontradicted by contemporaneous accounts of the highest authority.

The expedition against Mexico was undertaken the year following the election of Charles V. as emperor of Germany, and the third of his reign as king of Spain. It was the first auspicious event of any magnitude in the distinguished career of that monarch, who came to the throne under circumstances of much embarrassment and difficulty. Although but seventeen years of age, his vigorous and enterprising qualities were soon developed, and exercised a favorable influence on the spirit of discovery in the new world. Under this influence, says De Solis, the minds of men became disposed to great undertakings; greater ardor was infused into the breasts of the soldiers, and those preliminary operations took place that led the way to the conquest of New Spain, an event destined by Heaven to shed lustre on the commencement of the reign of that august monarch.†

Great disappointment had followed the discovery of the New World in the preceding reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. The

* Peter of Ghent, writing from Mexico in 1529, states that another priest and himself had baptized in the province of Mexico more than 200,000 persons; and often eight, and sometimes even ten or fourteen, thousand in a day. *Ternaux. Voyages*, etc.

† * * * "Nueva España, cuyo imperio tenia el cielo destinado para engrandecer los principios de este augusto Monarca." *Conquista de Mejico. Cap. V.*

pursuit of wealth, which was the grand stimulus to enterprise in that day as well as the present, had not been attended with the promised success, and instead of countries abounding in the precious metals, and producing the drugs and spices of the east, a few comparatively unimportant islands and a barren coast were all that had yet rewarded the toils of the adventurers. The proceeds of the voyages had been scarcely adequate to meet the expenses of their outfits. The hopes of Columbus, it is well known, were centered in the idea that his discoveries constituted a part of the Indies, then the fancied seat of unbounded riches, and his last voyage was undertaken for the single purpose of seeking along the coast of the Caribbean sea the strait which he imagined formed the communication between them. It is a curious fact, that he took with him two or three persons skilled in the Arabic language to serve as interpreters in the Mahometan countries, which he then expected to reach. In the course of this voyage, performed in the years 1502–4, the veteran navigator examined the coast of Central America from the Bay of Honduras to the Spanish Main; and although on the borders of countries far richer in the precious metals than those he sought, of which several striking indications were presented to him, all was lost sight of in the vain pursuit of the desired strait.

It was during the early part of this disastrous voyage, that the first glimpses were obtained of the superior civilization and wealth of Mexico. Leaving the island of St. Domingo for the south-west, Columbus was borne by the currents out of his course, and fell in with a group of islands near Cape Honduras on the upper coast of Guatemala. While examining the largest of these islands, a party from the squadron discovered a canoe of unusual size apparently arriving from some distant point, which was immediately captured and taken along side the Admiral's ship. It is described by Fernando Columbus, the Admiral's son, who accompanied the expedition, as "eight feet wide and as long as a galley, though formed of the trunk of a single tree, and shaped like those common in the islands. In the middle of the canoe there was an awning made of palm leaves, not unlike those of the Venitian gondolas, which formed

so close a covering as to protect whatever it contained against the effects of rain and the waves; under this awning were the women and children, and all the goods and merchandise. The canoe was under the direction of twenty-five men. * * * The Admiral gave thanks to God for having afforded him samples of the commodities of those countries without exposing his men to toil or danger. He ordered such things to be taken as seemed the most valuable, amongst which were cotton coverlets and tunics without sleeves, curiously worked and dyed of various colours; coverings for the loins of similar material; large mantles, in which the female Indians wrapped themselves like the Moorish women of Granada; long wooden swords with channels on each side of the blade, edged with sharp flints that cut the naked body as well as steel; copper hatchets for cutting wood, similar in form to the stone hatchets of other Indians; bells of the same metal, and crucibles in which to melt it. For provisions they had such roots and grains as the natives of Hispaniola eat; a sort of wine made of maize, resembling English beer; great quantities of almonds, of the kind used by the people of New Spain for money," &c.* The Spaniards were also struck with the personal modesty of these Indians, in which they greatly excelled the natives of the islands. The Admiral restored their canoe, and gave them some European articles in exchange for those he had taken. He then allowed them all to depart except one old man, who seemed to possess greater authority than the rest, and to be the most intelligent person amongst them; from him Columbus endeavored to obtain some information about the country, and finding that he understood the language spoken by the natives along the coast of Honduras as far as the Cape Gracias á Dios, he made use of him in his endeavors to hold intercourse and traffic

* The roots referred to were probably the mandioc, from which the cassava bread is made, and the yam or igname. A beverage composed of maize, water and sugar, is still common amongst the native Mexicans, under the name of *atole*. The fruit described under the name of "almonds," was the cacao bean, which closely resembles the almond in size and shape, and was used by the Mexicans for money, as well as for making chocolate.

with them. On arriving at that Cape, he dismissed him with presents.

To this account Don Fernando adds, that "although the Admiral had heard so much from these Indians concerning the great wealth, politeness and ingenuity of the people in the western parts of (what was afterwards called) New Spain, yet considering that, as these countries lay to leewards, he could sail thither whenever he might think fit from Cuba, he determined to leave them for another occasion, and persisted in his design of endeavoring to discover the strait across the continent, by which he might open the navigation of the south sea in order to arrive at the spice countries."* It is well remarked by Mr. Irving, that it would have been fortunate for the venerable navigator had he come to a different determination. "Within a day or two," says that brilliant writer, "he would have arrived at Yucatan; the discovery of Mexico and the other opulent countries of New Spain, would have necessarily followed; the southern ocean would have been disclosed to him, and a succession of splendid discoveries would have shed fresh glory on his declining age, instead of its sinking amidst gloom, neglect, and disappointment."

Two distinguished navigators endeavored to make amends for this omission of the Admiral, and in 1506, two years after his return from that voyage, undertook to follow in his track as far as Cape Honduras, with the intention of steering from that point to the shores of the rich and unknown countries described by the Indians as lying to the west. These were Juan Diaz de Solis, afterwards the discoverer of the Rio La Plata, and Vicente Yañez de Pinzon, who commanded a ship in the first expedition of Columbus to the new world. They succeeded in reaching Cape Honduras, by the aid of one of the Admiral's men who acted as their pilot; but on taking a westerly course soon found themselves in the bottom of a great bay, now known as the Bay of Honduras, with no indications of the rich coun-

*We have preferred to take the above account literally from the Spanish edition of Don Fernando's biography of his father, as more satisfactory than the embellished narratives of succeeding writers, who are indebted to that source for the facts.

tries of which they were in pursuit; returning thence they discovered the east side of the peninsula of Yucatan, but without exploring the coast, or ascertaining the character of the inhabitants. The discovery of Yucatan must, however, be ascribed to these bold navigators, although unsuccessful in the great object of their voyage.*

No account is found of any subsequent voyages in the same direction until the year 1517, when an expedition for discovery was fitted out from the island of Cuba, under the command of Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, consisting of three small vessels, carrying 110 men, who were enlisted amongst the Spanish adventurers in the islands. Antonio Alaminos, who had accompanied Columbus in his last voyage, acted as chief pilot. Taking a westerly course, after some days they arrived on the eastern coast of Yucatan, and gave the name of Catoche to a point of land, which it still bears.† Here they discovered a large town, and were visited by the inhabitants, who invited them on shore; but the appearance of kindness proved to be insincere, for they were attacked by an armed force, with which they had a sharp engagement. The enemy were at length defeated with considerable loss, and on the part of the Spaniards several were wounded. The natives were armed with wooden swords having edges of flint, darts, bows and arrows, and wore plumes of feathers, a defensive armor of quilted cotton, and bucklers. Near the place where the encounter happened, there were three buildings constructed of stone and lime, containing idols of clay and various articles formed of alloyed gold, "which," says Bernal Diaz, "gave us a high idea of the

* Herrera has a short account of this voyage under the year assigned to it above; but even this short account is abridged one half by the English translator. *Historia General*, etc. Dec. I. l. vi. c. 17. Holmes confounds this voyage with that in which Solis discovered the La Plata, ten years later. *American Annals*. A. D. 1516. Fernando Columbus complains that Solis and Pinzon pretended to be the first discoverers of the coast of Honduras, with manifest injustice to the Admiral, claiming that he had visited another part of the continent, in consequence of which the same places were twice laid down in the charts. He refers their voyage to the year 1508. *Historia del Almirante*. cap. 89.

† It seems, however, that there is some doubt as to the precise locality of Cape Catoche; there being several points of land on that coast which claim the distinction. See *Stephens's Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*. II. p. 356.

country we had discovered." No similar edifices had been previously seen in the new world, nor equal marks of civilization in other respects. Keeping in sight of the coast, the expedition continued its course to the north-west, until they arrived at Campeachy, where they were hospitably received by the natives, although finally admonished that they must leave the country. Here they saw also temples of stone with idols, and persons habited in long white mantles, with vessels in their hands containing burning coals, into which they cast a species of gum and thus perfumed the Spaniards, at the same time bidding them depart the country. A few leagues farther west they entered the river Champoton, on which was situated a large village called Potonchan, containing houses of stone and lime, and surrounded by fields of maize. Here they landed for the purpose of taking in water and cultivating the acquaintance of the people; but whilst engaged in filling their casks from a spring, they were attacked by a large body of the natives, and compelled to retreat to their boats with a heavy loss, forty-seven of their number being killed, and all the rest but one wounded; two men were taken prisoners, and five more died of their wounds on board of the ships. By the advice of the pilot the expedition now stood over for Florida, where they arrived in four days; here they landed near a creek, and took in water; but Alaminos, who had visited the place before in company with Juan Ponce de Leon,* cautioned his companions to be on their guard against the natives, who soon made their appearance and drove them with some loss to their ships. They now returned to Cuba, where Cordova died in a few days from the effects of his wounds.

When the governor of Cuba, Diego Velasquez, saw the ornaments of gold and other articles taken from the temples of Yucatan, and two young men in the costume of the country, all indicating greater wealth and cultivation than had been observed in any other part of the new world, his expectations were highly excited, and notwithstanding the disasters that had attended Cordova, another expedition was at once set on foot. The fame of the discovery soon spread abroad, with exaggerated

* The famous adventurer who discovered Florida in 1512.

accounts of the riches of the country, and little difficulty was experienced in enlisting a sufficient force for protection against the Indians. The armament consisted of four ships, commanded respectively by Juan de Grijalva, (in chief,) Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Montejo, and Alonzo de Avila, all persons of note, and possessed of estates in the islands. Alaminos again acted as chief pilot, and about two hundred and forty volunteers joined the expedition, which sailed from St. Jago de Cuba, on the eighth of April, 1518. It is not our intention to attempt a description of this enterprise; it is sufficient for our purpose to state that after discovering the island of Cozumel, (which he named Santa Cruz,) on the southern coast of Yucatan, Grijalva followed in the track of Cordova, landed at Potonchan, where he routed the Indians in a pitched battle, reembarked and pursued his way along the coast, near enough to see and admire the villages, in which could be distinguished houses of stone, that appeared white and lofty in the distance; recalling to the minds of the Spaniards their native land, to which they fancied the country bore a striking resemblance, and inducing them to name it NEW SPAIN. Touching at Tabasco, Guaxaca, and the island of S. Juan de Ulua, they proceeded along the coast as far as the river Panuco, where the present town of Tampico is situated. From S. Juan de Ulua, Grijalva despatched Alvarado to Cuba, with an account of his important discoveries, and all the treasure he had acquired. Soon after the rest of the expedition also returned, and arrived safely at St. Jago de Cuba, having been absent about six months.

This, says a distinguished modern historian,* was the most successful voyage which the Spaniards had hitherto made in the New World. They had discovered that Yucatan was not

* *Robertson. Hist. Am.* Bernal Diaz accompanied this expedition, and has given an interesting account of it. The chaplain Juan Diaz, who afterwards attended Cortes, wrote a brief "Itinerary" of the voyage, published in 1522, which has been recently disinterred and inserted in the valuable collection of M. TERNAUX. Gomara gives a curious list of the articles obtained from the Indians, and of the merchandise exchanged for them. Amongst the former were idols, cups, salt-cellars, ear-rings, necklaces, chains, &c., all of gold; forty hatchets of gold mixed with copper, razors of flint-stone, used in sacrifice, chiefly obtained at Tabasco.

an island as they had supposed, but part of the great continent of America. From Potonchan they had pursued their course for many hundred miles along a coast previously unexplored, the country appearing to be no less valuable than extensive. As soon as Alvarado arrived with the important intelligence, Velasquez at once despatched his chaplain to Spain, to obtain the requisite authority for conquering and settling the newly discovered lands. Before the return of this messenger the governor took immediate steps for equipping a powerful armament, adequate to the great objects he had in view. Dissatisfied with Grijalva for not having effected a settlement, Velasquez determined to appoint another person commander of the present expedition, who should more successfully carry out his own plans. This intentional act of injustice towards one who had just given such decided proofs of his prudence and efficiency in command, led to a retribution in the sequel as severe as it was justly merited.

The choice of Velasquez finally settled upon his brother-in-law Hernando Cortes, as the commander of the new expedition. Beside the connection that subsisted between them by marriage, there were other circumstances that led to this decision, to which we shall hereafter advert. Cortes was born at Medellin, a small town in the south-west of Spain, in the year 1485, and was consequently at the time of his appointment thirty-four years of age, nearly fifteen of which he had passed in the New World. According to Gomara, his parents were persons of respectable and even noble connexions in old Spain, and were generally esteemed for their piety and virtue, although reduced in fortune. His father, whose name was Martin Cortes de Monroy, had served when young in the wars of the peninsula as lieutenant of a company of horse, and such was his standing at the time of his son's first success in Mexico, that his personal influence with the court was usefully employed in his behalf to counteract the malevolence of his enemies. Cortes in his childhood was of feeble health, and often seemed at the point of death. He early adopted, says Gomara, who was afterwards his chaplain, the glorious apostle of Jesus Christ, St. Peter, as his patron saint, whose annual

festival he was always careful to observe. At fourteen years of age, he was sent by his parents to study at Salamanca, where he resided with Francisco Nuñez de Valera, who had married his father's sister. Here he commenced a regular course of academic education, it being the intention of his parents that he should not leave the university until prepared to graduate as bachelor of laws, as they designed him, says Gomara, on account of his talents and universal genius, for that rich and honorable profession. But Cortes was destined in this instance to disappoint their hopes; weary of study, and imbibing a taste for more active pursuits, he returned to his father's house after an absence of two years, much to the grief of his friends.* At that period war was the most honorable pursuit in which a man could engage, and the adventurous life to which it led had peculiar charms for a youth of the bold and impetuous temper of young Cortes. The principal theatre of martial exploits in Europe at that time was Naples, where the Great Captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova, was conducting the Spanish arms; and Cortes only hesitated between joining his countrymen in that quarter, and embarking for the new world in the retinue of his kinsman, Nicholas de Ovando, who had been just appointed to succeed Columbus in the government of the Indies. He finally decided upon the latter; but accidentally falling from a wall on which he stood in the act of serenading or otherwise paying his devoirs to some fair one, he was laid up by the injury he received until after the departure of Ovando. He then turned his attention again to Italy; but after wasting a year in fruitless endeavors to place himself in the road to military fame, he once more changed his determination and resolved to embark for the new world.

Receiving a small outfit from his parents, Cortes took passage at St. Lucar, in the year 1504, in a merchant ship bound to the island of St. Domingo, where he safely arrived, and was kindly received by his kinsman Ovando, the governor. After some

*Gomara, in describing the early education of Cortes, says that he spent two years at Salamanca in studying grammar ("*aprendiendo gramatica*"); but under the term "gramatica" was implied a course of study in Latin and Greek, as well as rhetoric, which it required three years to complete. See *Plan de Estudios de la Universidad de Salamanca.* Madrid, 1772.

service in the wars against the natives of the island, he finally settled in a new town, called Azua, being appointed public notary, and receiving from the governor lands and Indians for his support. Here he continued to reside for five or six years, employing himself in the improvement of his plantation; but when an expedition was fitted out for the conquest of the island of Cuba, in 1511, under Diego Velasquez, Cortes was induced to embark in it in the capacity of secretary to the king's treasurer, whose duty it was to keep an account of the fifths and other revenues of the crown. On the reduction of the island, which was effected with scarcely any opposition on the part of the natives, he settled at St. Jago de Baracoa, the first town founded by the Spanish colonists in Cuba, where he again devoted himself to the cultivation of the soil, and had alloted to him the distribution of the Indians of a certain district among the colonists in conjunction with Juan Juarez, a brother in law of the governor Velasquez. Cortes was the first to stock his plantation with cattle, and took great pains in the raising of horses, cows, and sheep. He employed his Indians in collecting gold, which was found in mountainous districts, the beds of rivers, and small streams, often in considerable quantities. He also formed a connexion in trade with Andres de Duero, a merchant, and by these various means succeeded in accumulating a handsome estate. The governor having at this time determined to erect a smelting-house for the precious metals, and a public hospital, the superintendence of those buildings was given to Cortes, who was otherwise much employed in public business.

When Don Diego Columbus, son of the Admiral, succeeded Ovando in the government of the Indies, in the year 1509, he was accompanied on his voyage to St. Domingo by his Vice-Queen, Doña Maria de Toledo, niece of the Duke of Alva, whom he had then recently married. They were attended by a retinue of hidalgos with their families, including many young ladies of rank.* Amongst these were the mother and three or

*Gomara is a little ungallant, when he says that they came in pursuit of rich husbands: "*con pensamiento de casarse allà con hombres ricos.*" Cron. Chap. IV. Irving is not less so: *Columbus*, II. 216.

four sisters of Juan Juarez, (already mentioned as associated with Cortes in the distribution of the Indians,) who came from Granada in old Spain. Diego Velasquez married one of these sisters, all of whom after the conquest of Cuba had removed to this island, of which he became the governor. Being remarkable for their beauty, these young Spanish ladies were much admired by their countrymen on the island; one of them named Catalina (or Catherine) attracted the regard of Cortes, who finally married her; and on account of the excellence of her character he was accustomed to say, that he prized her as highly as if she had been the daughter of a duke.* Prior to this marriage, a serious difficulty arose between Cortes and the governor. A number of the colonists had resolved to prefer some complaints against the latter to the viceroy, of which Cortes was chosen to be the bearer; and when about embarking in a canoe for the island of St. Domingo, on this mission, he was seized and thrown into prison by the orders of the governor. He was, however, subsequently pardoned by Velasquez, who even stood god-father to his daughter after his marriage.

Such are some of the circumstances that are related of Cortes before his engaging in the great enterprise that has immortalized his name. They go to show that he had established a good reputation for industry and talents amongst his fellow colonists, although, as remarked by Herrera, he did not appear to be possessed of so great intelligence and capacity as he afterwards displayed in affairs of superior moment. Disappointed in his expectation of finding great wealth at his command as soon as he should arrive in the New World,† he had quietly set himself down on a plantation, and applied to the cultivation of the soil, as the surest means of advancing his fortune. With the exception of occasional forrays amongst the hostile Indians of Hispaniola or Cuba, Cortes appears to have been wholly engrossed with these pursuits, and to have had little experience in military life before he embarked in his great enterprise. The wonderful tact and ability exhibited by him throughout the try-

* Doña Catalina remained at St. Jago until after the conquest, when she went to Mexico, and was received by Cortes with great distinction. She died at Mexico two or three years after.

† Gom. Cron. c. 3.

ing scenes of the conquest are on this account the more remarkable, and prove that nature had endowed him with extraordinary resources of mind, which only required a suitable occasion to be brought fully into exercise. Such an occasion had at length arrived.

The circumstances attending the outfit of the expedition to the newly discovered lands, and the appointment of Cortes to its command, are somewhat differently stated by the early historians; and subsequent writers have generally followed those least favorable to the conqueror.* In the following brief account it is proposed to rely chiefly upon the statements of Gomara, whose impartiality is at least equal to that of his contemporaries, and his means of information probably far superior. The weak and irresolute conduct of the governor of Cuba, Diego de Velasquez, in regard to this expedition, is, indeed, generally admitted, as well as the superior address and skilful management of its commander; but the impression is left, notwithstanding, that the former was unwarrantably deprived of the fruits of an enterprise projected and fitted out by himself. The little ground for sustaining a charge so dishonorable seems to be amply shown by the manner in which the enterprise was set on foot, and the discreditable efforts made by Velasquez to deprive Cortes of the command, and failing in these, to cut off its supplies and prevent its departure. Not content with these ineffectual attempts to frustrate the undertaking, it will be seen in one of the following despatches, that after Cortes had gained possession of the city of Mexico, Velasquez sent a powerful force against him under the command of Panfilo de Narvaez, a distinguished cavalier, and although this, like all his previous endeavors to check the career of the conqueror, proved abortive, it led to the temporary loss of the great city, and entailed a series of cruel disasters on the little band of heroes who had followed their undaunted leader into the heart of the Mexican empire.

*Las Casas and Bernal Diaz are particularly referred to, the former of whom wrote a general history of the Indies, still unpublished, which formed the main authority of Herrera. Las Casas, though a good man, was a prejudiced writer; and the same may be said of the old soldier who wrote his history to do justice to his companions in arms, excepting only his commander.

The return of Pedro de Alvarado, with ocular proofs of the riches of the country discovered by Grijalva, led the governor, as already mentioned, to plan another expedition, to be provided with men and arms for the reduction of the natives, and an assortment of cheap merchandise for traffic. He first applied to his relative Baltazar Bermudez to take the command, but as this person required an outfit of three thousand ducats for arming and victualling the ships, Velasquez objected to so large a sum, saying that the expenses would in that way exceed the profits of the enterprise. The truth was, says Gomara, he had a penurious disposition, and sought to have the benefit that would result from such an expedition without taking his share of the cost of fitting it out. He had pursued the same course with that of Grijalva, in which one ship had been provided by Francisco de Montejo, and several other cavaliers, amongst whom were Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero, Alonso de Avila, and Diego de Ordas, had embarked at their own charge. Bermudez thus declining the proffered command, the governor spoke to Cortes on the subject, proposing to share equally with him the expenses of the armament, as they were already joint partners with Andres de Duero, a merchant, in whose business they had together invested a considerable sum of money. At the same time, knowing his diligence, discretion, and energy of character, he desired Cortes to take command of the ships, and superintend the affairs of the voyage, it being in some respects a mercantile adventure. Not supposing that the enterprise would involve a large expenditure of money, and being ambitious of distinction, Cortes consented to the proposed partnership and accepted the command of the expedition; after which, having concluded upon the terms of their agreement, they despatched one of the companions of Alvarado to the island of Hispaniola, to obtain from the royal audience a license to traffic. The audience consisted of ecclesiastics, friars of the order of St. Jerome, named Luis de Figueroa, Alonso de Santo Domingo, and Bernaldino de Manzanedo, who exercised the supreme control in the absence of Diego Columbus, the governor, then in Spain. A license was granted by them recognizing Hernando Cortes as commander, and jointly concerned

with Diego Velasquez in the outfit of the expedition; also requiring it to be attended by a treasurer and surveyor on the part of the crown, to look after the king's fifths, as was usual.

As soon as the license was received, Cortes set about preparing for the voyage. No sooner had he made known his commission than great numbers began to flock to his standard; he then purchased a caravel and brigantine, beside the caravel in which Pedro de Alvarado had returned from Grijalva's expedition; Diego Velasquez furnished only a single brigantine. Cortes also procured small arms, artillery, and munitions of war, together with wine, oil, and other provisions. He expended seven hundred pesos of gold in the purchase of cheap articles for barter with the natives. Velasquez gave him a thousand pesos belonging to Panfilo de Narvaez, which he had in his hands, during the absence of the latter, declaring at the same time that he had not a penny left of his own. The agreement was finally executed between them in the presence of a public notary on the twenty-third day of October, in the year 1518.

In the mean time Grijalva himself arrived, contrary to the expectations of the governor, who had given him up for lost. Various causes now induced Velasquez to withdraw from his engagement with Cortes, and to render him unwilling to furnish money towards his enterprise; amongst others, he wished to send back the ships of Grijalva on his own account alone; and seeing the lavish manner in which Cortes expended money, he imagined that he intended to set up for himself; especially as he was taught by Bermudez and others to distrust him, as a subtle, proud and aspiring Estremaduran, who would not be likely to forget past griefs. Bermudez had begun to regret having himself declined the command, since Grijalva had returned in safety, bringing with him many striking proofs of the richness of the new countries. Supposing that Cortes would abandon the enterprise on his withdrawal, Velasquez sent to him the royal treasurer, Anador de Lares, to pursuade him to relinquish the design, promising to repay him all that he had expended. Cortes understanding the object of Velasquez, told Lares that he would be ashamed to relinquish the enterprise, nor would he give up the agreement; that if the gover-

nor wished to send some one else at his own individual charge, he might do it; but as for himself, he had the license of the royal audience and intended to improve it. He then repaired to his friends and the principal persons who intended to embark with him, to see if after the refusal of Velasquez he could still rely upon them; and when he found their confidence unshaken, he continued his preparations, borrowing money for the purpose, to the amount of 4000 pesos of gold from Andres de Duero, Pedro de Xerez, Antonio de Santa Clara, merchants in Cuba, and others. With the means thus furnished, he purchased two ships, six horses, and much clothing; he also kept open doors, and appeared in public fully armed and attended by a numerous retinue. Velasquez was evidently piqued on seeing the vigorous measures taken by Cortes in equipping his expedition, and his success in drawing men into his service, amongst whom were many of those who had returned with Grijalva; but he was unable to check him, for if he had undertaken to disturb his arrangements, it would have led to a commotion in the city, and perhaps to bloodshed; he therefore dissembled his feelings. In the mean time, Cortes hastened his departure; he proclaimed that he went on his own account alone, and told the soldiers that they had nothing to do with Diego Velasquez; he also bade them lay in their own provisions to the extent of their means. Having taken on board a lot of hogs and sheep, for which he gave the owner a chain of gold in payment, he set sail from Saint Jago on the 18th of November, with about 300 Spaniards in six ships.

The expedition was but poorly supplied with provisions for so many men, and Cortes found it necessary immediately after quitting St. Jago, (which he left somewhat hastily on account of the temper of the governor,) to despatch a caravel to Jamaica to procure a further supply, with orders to rejoin the fleet at Cape Corrientes, or Point St. Antonio, which is the northern extremity of Cuba. In the mean time, the rest of the ships sailed to Macaca, on the southern coast of the island, where Cortes purchased three hundred *cargas* of bread* and

* A *carga* or load was 50 lbs., being the amount of burthen assigned to an Indian. A mule load was of course more.

some swine. He sailed from that port to Trinidad, where he bought another ship, three horses, and a thousand bushels of corn. While at this place he received information of the passing of a ship laden with provisions for the mines, and despatched a caravel well armed under the command of Diego de Ordas, with orders to intercept the ship and carry her to Point St. Antonio. Ordas succeeded in overtaking the vessel in the channel of the Gardens, and took her to the place appointed, but the master, whose name was Juan Nuñez Sedeño, went to Trinidad with the register or manifest of his cargo, which consisted of 4000 arrobas of bread,* 1500 hams, and a large number of fowls. For these Cortes paid him in part, and gave his note for the balance; when Sedeño joined the expedition. At Trinidad about two hundred men were enlisted, most of whom had accompanied Grijalva, and belonged to that place, Matanzas, Carenas, and other settlements on the island. Sending forward the ships, Cortes himself with some of the men proceeded by land across the island to the Havana, where out of respect to the governor the inhabitants would sell him no provisions; but two functionaries of the church, one of whom was the collecter of tithes for the bishop, and the other receiver of the Pope's bulls, supplied him with two thousand hams and as many more cargas of maize, cassava and yams. Thus the fleet was comfortably provided with stores, and Cortes began to distribute the men and provisions amongst the different ships.

At this port, Cortes was joined by Pedro de Alvarado, Cristobal de Olid, Alonso de Avila, Francisco de Montejo, and others of Grijalva's expedition, who arrived in a caravel, having been on a visit to Diego Velasquez. Amongst these came one Garnica, with letters from Velasquez to Cortes, desiring him to wait until he could come or send to him on matters of importance to both of them; at the same time, he wrote to Diego Ordas and others, requesting them to arrest him. Ordas accordingly invited Cortes to an entertainment on board of his caravel, thinking to take him to St. Jago; but Cortes understanding the design, pretended to have a sickness at his stomach, and declined the

*An arroba is 25 lbs.

invitation. In order, however, to prevent any trouble from arising, he went on board his own ship, and made the usual signal for the rest of the fleet to get under weigh, with orders to sail for St. Antonio, where all soon arrived in good condition. Here he reviewed his troops, and found they numbered five hundred and fifty Spaniards, of whom fifty were mariners. He then distributed them into eleven companies of fifty each, and appointed the following captains to command them, viz. Alonso de Avila, Alonso Fernandez Puertocarrero, James de Ordas, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco de Morla, Francisco de Salzedo, Juan de Escalante, Juan Velasquez de Leon, Cristobal de Olid, and Pedro de Alvarado. Cortes himself took the command of one company. Each captain had also command of one of the ships, which were eleven in number. Antonio de Alaminos was appointed chief pilot, having served in that capacity with both Cordova and Grijalva. About two hundred Indians, natives of the island of Cuba, were taken for the purpose of carrying burthens, together with several negroes and native women, and sixteen horses and mares. Their stores amounted to five thousand hams, and six thousand cargas of maize, cassava, and yams, besides fowls, sugar, wine, oil, peas and other leguminous plants. The merchandise consisted of a variety of cheap articles, which were distributed amongst the ships. The burthen of the commander's ship was one hundred tons; three others were eighty tons each; and the remainder were brigantines and small vessels without decks. The device of the flag was flames of fire on a white and blue ground, with a red cross in the midst of the blaze, and the following words on the borders in Latin as a motto: "FRIENDS, LET US FOLLOW THE CROSS, AND IF WE HAVE FAITH IN THAT STANDARD, WE SHALL CONQUER."*

Such were the preparations made by Hernando Cortes for his great enterprise. Never before, says Gomara, did any captain so feebly attended gain such brilliant victories, or subdue so vast an empire. He took no money with him to pay his men; on the contrary he was deeply indebted; and indeed

* Amici, Crucem sequamur, et in hoc signo vincemus.

it was not necessary to offer wages to Spaniards in the Indies as an inducement to engage in such expeditions. The prospect of making valuable discoveries, leading to their own as well as the public advantage, was a sufficient consideration. When the whole expedition was in readiness for sailing, Cortes made an animated address to his followers, by which they were much encouraged in their hopes of a successful enterprise. After celebrating a solemn mass, and invoking St. Peter, his patron saint, he gave orders for the fleet to get under weigh, and the expedition finally sailed on the eighteenth of February, in the year 1519.

The first night a violent storm arose that dispersed the ships, but as it was not of long continuance, the whole fleet, with the exception of one ship, arrived in good condition at the island of Cozumel, which had been appointed as a place of rendezvous in case of separation; the missing vessel was afterwards found on the other side of the peninsula, safely anchored in a bay near Campeachy. Pedro de Alvarado had reached Cozumel two days in advance of the rest of the expedition, and landing at the Indian town on the coast, found it deserted; proceeding thence into the interior of the island, he discovered another town about a league distant, which was also abandoned by the inhabitants. The soldiers here seized upon every thing of any value, such as cotton garments, provisions, &c., and stripped a temple of its idols with their ornaments of gold, sacrificial knives, and other utensils, formed of gold alloyed with copper. They also took three prisoners, two men and a woman. As soon as Cortes arrived, and understood what had been done by Alvarado's party, he was greatly incensed, and having publicly reprimanded that officer, ordered whatever had been taken to be restored, and the prisoners set at liberty; to whom he gave some trifling presents for their caciques, as a token of friendship, at the same time expressing his regret at what had taken place in his absence. Soon after the natives began to visit the Spanish camp, and before the departure of the expedition, the most cordial and friendly intercourse existed between them. Such was a commencement of the conciliatory policy adopted by Cortes towards the Indians throughout his

whole enterprise; he never resorted to hostile measures until every possible effort had been made to avoid them without success.

The principal temple on this island attracted the attention of the Spaniards; it was well built of stone, in the form of a square tower, with four doors or windows opening upon an embattled corridor. It contained an idol of unusual dimensions, placed against the wall, and unlike in figure any others they had seen. In the rear was a room corresponding to the sacristry or vestry of a church, where were kept the articles used in the service of the temple, and belonging to the idol or the priests. There was a small, secret door that opened through the wall into the body of the idol, by means of which one of the priests entered, and answered audibly the prayers and petitions of the worshippers, who believed that the idol itself spoke, and were liberal in their offerings, which consisted of the fumes of copal, burnt as incense, bread and fruits, together with the blood of quails and other birds, dogs, and even men. Such was the fame of this idol, that devotees resorted to the island from various countries for the purpose of paying it homage. But what was most remarkable in the religious ceremonies of this people was their worship of the cross; for within an enclosure formed by a handsome turreted wall of stone and lime, at the base of this temple, stood a cross of stone about ten feet high, which they adored as the god of rain; and in times of drought, the devotees going in large processions made it offerings of quails to appease its anger. The origin of this worship of the cross is quite mysterious, says Gomara, (from whom this account is almost literally taken,) for there is no reason to suppose that the gospel was ever preached on their island, or any where else in the new world, before the arrival of the Spanish discoverers.*

During his stay on this island, Cortes took means to reform

* Cron. Nuev. Esp. Cap. xv. Stephens, in his recent work on Yucatan, has an interesting account of his visit to the island of Cozumel, which, it seems, is now destitute of inhabitants. The remains of the temple described above are still to be seen there. A "Cozumel cross" is shown in a church at Merida, but if the same seen on the island by the conquerors, it has received sundry additions. *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan. II.* 376–7.

the religion of the natives by erecting altars in their temples, destroying their idols, and substituting in their place crosses and images of the Virgin Mary and the saints; to which the islanders, abandoning their own superstitions, paid apparent respect, burning incense before them, and bringing them offerings of quails, Indian corn, fruits and other things, which they had been accustomed to present to their idols. They also requested Cortes to leave with them a teacher of the true faith, who would instruct them how to worship the God of the Christians; which however, he declined doing on account of the small number of priests in the expedition, as well as from an unwillingness to expose the life of any individual amongst a people but partially converted from the errors of paganism.*

Through a native of the island who had been taken to Cuba by Grijalva, and now served as an interpreter, it was casually ascertained that there were several Spaniards in captivity on the coast of Yucatan; when Cortes at once despatched Ordas in a brigantine with several natives, bearing a letter addressed to the Spaniards, and some trifling articles for their ransom. Ordas, after landing the Indians on the coast, was directed to wait eight days only for their return; but at the expiration of that time, neither the Spanish captives nor the islanders had appeared. He then went back to the island, and Cortes supposing he had been deceived soon after took his leave of Cozumel. But the fleet had not proceeded far on its way, when one of the vessels sprung a leak, and rendered it necessary to return to the island for repairs. This accident was regarded by the Spaniards as an instance of divine interposition in their behalf; for it led to the recovery of a Christian captive, who was well qualified to act as an interpreter of the language of Yucatan, from his long residence in that country. The repairs were already completed, and the ships ready to set sail on the Saturday following their return to the island, but contrary winds detained them till the next day; as this was the first Sunday in Lent, they determined to hear mass, and then after taking some refreshment to embark. While Cortes was partaking of his repast, he was

* Fathers Olmedo and Juan Diaz (supposed author of the Itinerary of Grijalva's voyage) accompanied the expedition.

told that a canoe under sail was crossing from Yucatan in the direction of the ships; and rising from the table he discovered the canoe bending its way to the shore. He immediately dispatched a party of men to watch her landing, who, concealing themselves near the shore, saw four tawny savages (as they appeared) leave the canoe; they were armed with bows and arrows, and on seeing the Spaniards approach them with drawn swords, three of them fled, but the fourth called the others back, telling them in the Indian tongue to have no fears. He then addressed the Spaniards in their own language, and inquired if they were Christians; on their answering in the affirmative, and that they were Spaniards, tears of joy filled his eyes; he then asked if it was not Wednesday, for he had a prayer-book in which he prayed every day, and begged them to thank God for his delivery. Kneeling down devoutly, stretching out his hands, and turning his eyes towards Heaven, while tears bathed his cheeks, he made his humble prayer to God, giving him hearty thanks for his deliverance out of the hands of infidels and savages, and his restoration to the society of Christians and his own countrymen. The Spanish soldiers then embraced him, and conducted him to Cortes, by whom he was joyfully received and supplied with suitable apparel. His name was Geronimo de Aguilar.

Cortes finally sailed from Cozumel on the fourth of March, having received a supply of wax and honey from the natives, who parted with him in the most friendly manner. Steering towards Yucatan, he ran in near the coast, which he closely followed to the northwest, examining with the boats and smaller vessels every little bay and river in quest of the missing ship. In this way they reached Campeachy, in the neighborhood of which, on entering a bay formed by a small group of islands, the missing ship was found in good condition, and so completely land-locked that Cortes gave the bay the name of Puerto Escondido, which it still bears.* The ship's company hailed the arrival of their companions with great joy, having feared the loss of the rest of the fleet. They had been supplied with game for food by a greyhound, which had been left on the coast by one of the former expeditions.

* At least there is a bay of that name in the same neighborhood.

From this place Cortes pursued his route to the river Tabasco, where Grijalva had met with a most liberal and kind reception from the natives.* On their arrival at the mouth of that river, the large ships not being able to pass the bar came to anchor. The Spaniards were at once struck with the appearance of boats filled with Indians; some armed, and all much superior in aspect to those of the islands. Leaving a sufficient force to guard the ships, Cortes embarked the rest in the brigantines and small boats, with several pieces of artillery, and rowed up the river against a strong current. After proceeding a little more than half a league, he discovered a large town with houses built of sun-dried bricks and covered with thatched roofs. It was surrounded by a wall of timber, of great strength and provided with loopholes, through which arrows, stones and darts were discharged in time of war. Accosting some of the canoes, through the interpreter Aguilar, Cortes requested leave to land for supplies of fresh water and provisions, of which they were in want, and would pay well. The boatmen promised to take a message to the town and bring an answer. They went, and soon returned bringing five or six boats filled with bread, and a few turkeys, which they told the Spaniards to accept as a gift. Cortes replied that these were entirely inadequate to their wants, on account of the number of persons in the large ships below, which they had not seen; and he begged they would send word to allow him to enter the town and obtain his supplies. The Indians asked one night to consider his request and returned to the town; while Cortes went to a little island in the river, where he waited till morning for their answer. Both practised some deception; the Indians wanting the time in order to carry away their effects and women and children to the mountains during the night, and to rally their warriors; while Cortes sent for the rest of his force that had been left in the ships to come up to the island; and caused a search to be made on the river for a fording place. Neither party knew what the other was doing during the night. The men came from the ships, and a ford was found within less than half a

* This river was long called from its discoverer the *Rio de Grijalva:* which it still bears on some maps.

league above, where the water was only two or three feet deep. They also discovered a thicket of trees under shelter of which they could approach very near the town without being seen. Cortes on obtaining this information immediately directed two officers, Alonzo de Avila and Pedro de Alvarado, with each 150 men, to occupy the woods the same night, in order to be in readiness, on hearing a signal, to attack the town on the land side in the morning.

As soon as it was day, eight boats filled with armed men, more numerous than before, came to the island, bringing a very small quantity of provisions, saying that they could not fetch more, as the inhabitants had all fled from the town from fear; and they therefore begged that the Spaniards would take this supply, and return to the sea, and not disturb the peace of the country. The interpreter answered that it was shameful to leave them to perish with hunger, and that they would soon repent it. They replied that they knew them not, and as they had a frightful appearance, they feared to admit them to their houses; and if they wanted water, they could take it out of the river or dig wells, as they did when they wanted it. Cortes then said, that he could by no means depart without entering the town and seeing the country, for the purpose of giving an account of it to the greatest lord in the world, who had sent him there; and that they might give him a favorable reception or not, as they pleased; if not, he should commend himself to the power of God and his own strength. The Indians retorted, that he had better go away, and not boast in other people's country; and that as to entering the town, they would never permit it, and if attempted, they would destroy them all. Cortes still persisted in his endeavor to obtain an amicable reception, but finding it all in vain, gave the signal for the attack on the land-side, and he himself at the head of 200 men approached in boats near the town wall, where he discharged his ordnance and then leaped into the water to the knees, and began the assault on the walls and bulwarks. The Indians fought with desperation, wounding several Spaniards with their arrows and darts; and although terrified at the strange noise of the ordnance, made a courageous resistance and fled not from the walls. But the

land force coming upon them unawares, entered the town on the side where it was not defended; the enemy seeing this, left the river side of the town to defend the other, and in the mean time Cortes entered, and took possession of the market place, and drove the inhabitants out of the town. The Spaniards searched the houses, but found nothing but Indian corn, turkeys, some articles of cotton, and a few grains of gold. Cortes took up his quarters in the temple, which afforded space enough to contain all the Spaniards, as it had a court and several large and elegant halls. This was the first city taken by force of arms in the course of the expedition.

After another engagement the caciques waited upon Cortes, bringing presents of gold, cotton mantles, and ornaments of feathers, and twenty female slaves; and having made many excuses for their conduct, submitted cheerfully to the power of the superior beings by whom they had been conquered. They also brought cassava bread, turkeys, fruits, and other provisions, together with a considerable amount of gold. Cortes received them kindly and made them some small presents in return, which they valued highly. It was remarked on this occasion, that the Indians were struck by the neighing of the horses, and imagining that they spoke, inquired of the Spaniards what they said; who replied that they were offended on account of their having fought against them. The simple Indians then asked the horses their pardon, and gave them roses and turkey-hens to eat.*

Departing from Tabasco, the expedition continued its cruise in a north-westerly direction, keeping close in with the land, until they arrived at a river which they called Alvarado, from the captain of that name, who was the first to enter it; this name it still bears. From thence they followed the coast until they reached the islands of Sacrificios and S. Juan de Ulua, opposite the present city of Vera Cruz.

This part of the Mexican coast was called Chalchiucoecan by the Indians, great numbers of whom flocked down to the

* Gom. Cron. c. xxi. Cortes in his second letter calls the river Tabasco the *Rio Grande*, and the town *Potonchan*. See p. 69. Gomara also gives the same name to the town. In his fourth letter, Cortes mentions the river under the names of Victoria and Grijalva. See p. 361.

shore on the arrival of the fleet, and made signals to the Spaniards, inviting them to land. Two canoes also went along side, with messengers from the governor, named Teuhtlile or Teudilli, inquiring for the admiral of the fleet; and when shown into his presence they made a humble salutation, and gave him to understand that the governor wished to know what people they were and what they wanted, and to offer them any assistance for the prosecution of their voyage. Aguilar, the interpreter, was now at fault, not understanding their language; but Cortes endeavored to make amends by entertaining the messengers in a hospitable manner; and inviting them to partake of wine and sweetmeats, he signified to them that the next day he would come on shore and visit the governor in the most friendly manner. He then dismissed them with presents. The next day being Good Friday, Cortes landed with a large number of his men, taking with him also the horses and artillery, and two hundred natives of Cuba, who performed the drudgery of the camp. Having selected the best situation he could find amongst the sand banks on the sea shore, he employed his men in building huts of the branches of trees; and while they were thus engaged, many Indians came amongst them bringing pieces of gold to barter for such trinkets as had been given to the governor's messengers. They also brought much bread and meat already cooked in their fashion, and red pepper, which they were willing to give or sell to the Spaniards. In exchange for these things, they received glass beads, looking-glasses, scissors, knives, pins, &c., which pleased them much. The next day they came again with a fresh supply of gold and provisions; but Cortes cautioned his people not to show too great an eagerness for gold, lest it should be supposed to have been the object of their coming; and he even forbade their receiving it at all, in order to guard against such an impression. On the following day, which was Easter, Cortes received a visit in his camp from the governor; who came from his residence, a distance of eight leagues, for this purpose. He was attended by a retinue of men, who were unarmed and for the most part well clothed, some of them in rich cotton garments; others were naked and laden with provisions, being in the capacity of porters. The governor paid his respects to Cortes after the

manner of the country, burning before him incense and little straws touched with his own blood; he then presented him the supplies of food brought by his servants, several rich jewels of gold, curiously wrought, and other not less finished articles composed of feathers. Cortes embraced him, and showed every mark of pleasure at his visit; he also saluted his attendants, at the same time he gave him a robe of silk, a medallion, a necklace of glass, a quantity of beads, looking-glasses, scissors, laces, rings, shirts, handkerchiefs, and various articles composed of leather, wool, and iron, all which, though of little value, the Indians prized very highly.

In consequence of Aguilar's inability to understand the Mexican or Aztec language, and the want of another interpreter, Cortes found great difficulty in making himself understood by the governor; fortunately this difficulty was about to be removed. It happened on the occasion of this visit, that one of the twenty female slaves given to the Spanish leader by the cacique of Tabasco was observed to be engaged in conversation with a servant of the governor, and on inquiry Cortes ascertained that she understood the Mexican as well as the Maya language, having acquired the latter at Tabasco. She was a young girl of great beauty and sprightliness, and quick apprehension, who in the distribution of the slaves had been assigned to Don Alonso Puertocarrero, one of the Spanish officers. With the rest of the slaves she was baptized at Tabasco, and took the name of Marina. Although in the condition of a menial, Marina was the daughter of a cacique of Guasacualco, having been taken from her home and sold as a slave after the death of her father. Cortes, as soon as he discovered her knowledge of the Mexican language, (which was spoken in the place of her nativity), promised to restore her to freedom, if she would act with fidelity as an interpreter. Marina of course complied, and afterwards throughout the conquest proved of invaluable service to the expedition. At first she interpreted the Mexican into Maya to Aguilar, who communicated with Cortes in Spanish; but being of a quick capacity, she soon acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Spanish to enable her to translate the Mexican directly into that language. "She was always

faithful to the Spaniards," says Clavigero, "and her services to them can never be overrated; as she was not only the instrument of their negotiations with the Mexicans, the Tlascalans, and the other nations of Anahuac, but frequently saved their lives by warning them of dangers, and pointing out the means of escaping them." The same learned historian adds, "We have thought proper not to omit these incidents in the life of a woman who was the first Christian of the Mexican empire, who makes so distinguished a figure in the history of the conquest, and whose name has been, and is still so celebrated, not less among the Mexicans than the Spaniards."

The limits of this introduction forbid our giving all the particulars of the visit of the Mexican governor to Cortes, but it resulted in impressing the Spaniards with a high conception of the wealth and extent of the Mexican empire. Cortes was now fully resolved to conquer the country, and to make a permanent settlement in it. He began to look around for a convenient situation to establish a town, and to discover a good harbor for his ships. Not satisfied with the place where he was, on account of the sandy nature of the ground, he despatched Montejo with two brigantines and fifty men to run along the coast for the purpose of finding a convenient port; who accordingly proceeded as far as the mouth of the river Panuco, without discovering one, and after an absence of three weeks returned with this report; adding, however, that he had met with a place on the coast that was sheltered by a high rock, which was the nearest approach to a harbor that he found. Being informed that the ground at this place (called Chianiztlan) was convenient for a town, having woods and plains, and an abundance of stone suitable for building, with excellent pasturage and tillable land, watered by two rivers, although the harbor was insufficient, Cortes determined to form a settlement there, and sending round the ships he proceeded thither by land with 400 men and all the horses. Before his departure a deputation of Totonacas, sent by the lord of Cempoal, a city eight leagues distant, came to invite them to visit that city, which was subject to the Mexicans, but inclined to throw off their yoke; and having heard of the victory at Ta-

basco, the cacique was desirous of forming an alliance with the Spaniards for that purpose. Cortes determined to visit this city on his way to the site of the proposed settlement; and when he had arrived within three miles of it, he was met by a deputation of twenty citizens, bringing refreshments in the name of the cacique, who sent an apology for not coming himself. The troops marched into the city in order of battle, from apprehension of treachery, and proceeded through the streets beholding with astonished pleasure the beauty and extent of the city, so far surpassing all they had before seen in the new world. The population was estimated at 60,000, and the Spaniards called it another Seville.

In the market-place of Cempoal stood an immense building of stone and lime, with loopholes and towers, the walls whitened with plaster that glittered like silver as the sun shone upon them. At first the Spaniards imagined these walls to be composed of solid silver, but this error was soon corrected. Within this palace was a long suite of apartments, in which the Spaniards fixed their quarters, planting the cannon at the doors for security, and keeping themselves in readiness in case of treachery. Their fears fortunately proved groundless; the cacique directed a splendid supper to be prepared for them, and convenient bedding. The next morning the cacique waited upon Cortes, and made him many rare and valuable presents; amongst these were cotton garments in the Egyptian fashion with a knot on the shoulder, and jewels of gold valued at two thousand ducats. This visit was returned by Cortes on the following day in a becoming manner. In his conversation the cacique complained loudly of the oppression and tyranny of Montezuma, the Mexican ruler, who had but lately usurped the government of Cempoal; he also professed his willingness to join an alliance against him. At the same time he extolled the riches and magnificence of the city of Mexico, planted in the midst of a great lake, and the splendor of the court of Montezuma.

After remaining several days in this city, Cortes took his leave, and proceeded with the troops to Chiahuitztla [Chian-

iztlan] where he intended to found the new colony. This was the country of the Totonacs, who had a small town situated near the site of the proposed settlement, about twelve miles from Cempoal. These Indians were eager to throw off the Mexican yoke, refusing to pay the customary tribute, and even imprisoning the Mexican nobles who had been sent to collect it. They also assisted the Spaniards in building a sufficient number of houses in the new town, and constructing a small fortress. Before finally leaving his quarters on the sea coast where he had landed, Cortes had caused the officers of the proposed town to be elected in the manner customary in Spain.*

It was also determined that the new town should receive the name of La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, which was accordingly given to the settlement at Chiahuitztla. This town is sometimes mentioned in the following letters under the name of Villa Rica, but more frequently of Vera Cruz.† It was the first Spanish colony on the continent of North America.

After the organization of the town, Cortes resigned his command to the municipal authorities, on the ground that Diego Velasquez from whom he had originally received it, and the royal

* According to Gomara, these officers were appointed by Cortes; but Bernal Diaz, who was present, is a better authority in a matter of this nature. See Ward's *Mexico*, I. 73.

† It seems there have been three places called Vera Cruz; first, Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz; second, Vera Cruz Antigua, founded in 1523 or 4; and third, the present city of that name, which was not settled until near the close of the 16th, or the beginning of the 17th century. But the harbor at the latter place was well known from the first under the name of San Juan, to which the Mexican name of *Chalchiuhecan* was sometimes added. Gage, who visited Mexico in 1625, styles this place "*St. John de Ulhua, otherwise Vera Crux;*" but the name of S. Juan de Ulua belongs to the island opposite the city, on which stands the celebrated fortress erected by the Spanish government at the enormous expense (it is said) of more than forty millions of dollars, which was the last foothold of Spanish power in Mexico, having held out several years longer than the rest of the country. Its fall was announced by the President of the Republic in a proclamation dated November 23d, 1825, in which he said—"The standard of the Republic waves on the castle of Ulua! I announce to you, fellow citizens, with indescribable pleasure, that now, after the lapse of 304 years, the flag of Castile has disappeared from our coast." *Clavigero. Humboldt.* Gage's *New Survey of the West Indias.* "*Mexico in* 1842," &c.

council at St. Domingo who had confirmed and enlarged his powers, were neither of them qualified to exercise any jurisdiction in these newly discovered lands, which he was about to reduce and colonize in the name of the King of Castile. But one of the first acts of the town-council was to re-invest him with the authority of Captain-General and chief magistrate, until the pleasure of the crown was known. This step, although generally approved by the adventurers, was not acceptable to all; some, who were the partisans of Velasquez, demanded that the expedition should return to Cuba, and to such an extent was the disaffection carried, that Cortes found it necessary to put a number of persons under arrest, amongst whom were two captains, Juan Velasquez de Leon and Diego de Ordas; who, however, were afterwards gained over by persuasion, and became his warm friends. Greater confidence had been given to this faction by the arrival of a vessel from that island, bringing intelligence that Velasquez had received from Spain the title of Adelantado, with a commission from the crown to govern and colonize the newly discovered lands. But what was of greater importance to Cortes, the same ship brought a small reinforcement of men and horses to his little army, being already somewhat reduced in number by long exposure to the unhealthy atmosphere of the bayous of the coast, and other causes.

While the Spaniards were busily engaged in laying out and building the new town, in which they were greatly assisted by their neighbors the Totonacs, (whose language, differing from that of Mexico, was interpreted to Marina by some amongst them who understood the Aztec,) there arrived a deputation from the capital, consisting of two nephews of Muteczuma, accompanied by a numerous retinue of nobles and others, bringing a magnificent present of articles, beautifully wrought of gold and other costly materials. Cortes received them with expressions of gratitude, and hospitably entertained the Mexican chiefs.

About the same time, while on a visit to the city of Cempoal, Cortes endeavored to convince the cacique of the absurdity of the worship paid to idols, and to convert him to the true faith,

but without success. We cannot, he answered, abjure the worship of our gods, from whose hands we receive health, plenty, and all the blessings we enjoy. Undeterred, however, by the attachment which the people of Cempoal showed to their false deities, Cortes commanded his soldiers to enter the temples, and break down the idols. In the mean time, the cacique, filled with indignation, threatened to call down instant vengeance upon the heads of the Spaniards, if they dared to execute their purpose. But when it was suggested to him that his new friends would form an alliance with the Mexicans, and take measures to accomplish his ruin, the cacique at length told Cortes to do as he pleased, when fifty Spanish soldiers rapidly ascended the steps of the temples, and began to break in pieces the idolatrous images; this would have provoked an attack from the more daring amongst the people, had not the Spanish leader caused the cacique and four of the priests to be seized, and required them to exercise their influence in curbing the violence of the excited multitude. He afterwards compelled the priests to collect the fragments of the idols and commit them to the flames in his presence, and introduced the symbols of Christian worship into all their temples. Thus was idolatry finally extinguished in Cempoal.

Cortes now resolved to march to the city of Mexico; but prior to his departure, he thought proper to transmit to his sovereign an account of all that had occurred to the expedition. The letter or despatch containing this report, is not now extant, but there is no doubt that it comprised all the particulars of the enterprise, from the first moment of his connection with it, including his difficulties with the governor of Cuba;* its loss is therefore deeply to be regretted. At the same time, he forwarded to the emperor the whole amount of gold and other articles of value which had been procured in the country, having induced the soldiers to relinquish their share for this purpose. Two other letters were also written, one subscribed by the magistrates of the new colony, and the other by the principal officers of the army, in which they requested

* Gom. Cron. c. 40.

his acceptance and approbation of what they had done in his service, and to confirm the offices of General and Chief Judge conferred by them on Cortes, whom they recommended in terms of the highest praise.* The two captains Puertocarrero and Montejo were deputed to be the bearers of the letters and presents to Spain, who accordingly set sail in the best ship of the squadron, with Alaminos for their pilot, on the 16th of July, 1519. They arrived in safety at St. Lucar in the following October ; but on information to the board of trade by the chaplain of Diego Velasquez, then in Spain, every thing in the ship was seized, but the present to the king was sent to him at Valladolid. The commissioners, accompanied by the father of Cortes, succeeded in obtaining an audience of the king at Tordesillas, where the presents were exhibited, together with several native Mexicans of both sexes, and drew forth the admiration of Charles and all who beheld them. But owing to the pressure of other cares, the king referred the matters in dispute between Cortes and the governor of Cuba to the council of the Indies, from whom it passed to Cardinal Adrian, regent of the kingdom during the emperor's absence in Germany, and thus great delays arose in regard to a final determination.

Cortes had a powerful enemy to contend with in Spain, who was no less a person than Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, the president of the council of the Indies, to whom was committed the regulation of colonial affairs. This man, so notorious for the spiteful malevolence with which he thwarted the views of Columbus, was equally rancorous in his opposition to the conqueror of Mexico. During a period of more than thirty years Fonseca exercised an almost despotic control over Spanish American affairs. "His administration," says Irving, "bears no marks of enlarged and liberal policy, but is full of traits of arrogance and meanness. * * * To show that his character has not been judged with undue severity, it is expedient to point out his invidious and persecuting conduct towards Hernando Cortes. The bishop, while ready to foster rambling adventurers who came forward under his patronage, had never

*Clavigero.

the head or the heart to appreciate the merits of illustrious commanders like Columbus and Cortes."* It is added that personal interest induced Fonseca to favor Diego Velasquez, between whom and a sister of the bishop a marriage was negotiating at that time. Thus every obstacle was thrown in the way of a just appreciation of the services of Cortes, and, as will be seen in the following Despatches, nothing but the exercise of the utmost tact and firmness prevented on more than one occasion his being arrested in the midst of his career of conquest.

But at length, after nearly three years of tedious delay, embittered by false and malicious imputations, the venerable father of Cortes and the deputies from New Spain, having made a statement of their case to the Cardinal, afterwards Pope Adrian VI., succeeded in obtaining an order forbidding the bishop to interfere in the controversy between Cortes and Velasquez, and revoking as far as possible all his former acts in relation to this matter. This was soon followed by a reference of the affair to a special commission, composed of the grand chancellor and other eminent persons, who, after a full hearing on both sides,† unanimously agreed in awarding a triumphant verdict in favor of Cortes. It was decided that Velasquez had no other claim than for the money he had expended in the outfit of the expedition; but that by revoking the commission he had granted to Cortes, he had left him free to act as he should judge best for the royal service with the ships and men, which for the most part he had raised and equipped at his own expense and that of his friends. This decision was fully approved by the emperor, and communicated to Cortes in a royal despatch, which contained likewise information of his appointment as Governor and Captain-General of New Spain, and the most flattering encomiums on his conduct. Other despatches were sent at the same time to Diego

* "*Life and Voyages of Columbus.*" I. 338-9.

† On the part of Cortes appeared his father, Martin Cortes, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco Nuñez, and other attorneys: and on the part of Velasquez, Manuel de Roxas, Andres de Duero, and others. Gomara. *Cron.* c. 165.

Velasquez and Francisco de Garay, censuring their past proceedings, and commanding them to desist from any future interference with the affairs of New Spain. These despatches were all dated the 22d of October, 1522. A more signal triumph could not have been achieved, which, while it gave additional lustre to the victorious career of Cortes, carried dismay to the minds of his great opponents, Fonseca and Velasquez, both of whom died not long after in comparative disgrace.

Having thus brought this preliminary sketch of the early expeditions to the Mexican coast, and of the career of the conqueror, down to the time when the narrative is taken up by his own pen, it only remains to add a list of the principal articles already mentioned, which the Spaniards received on their first landing in Mexico, being for the most part presents from Montezuma through his governor Teuthlili. They were sent to Charles V. by the first commissioners Puertocarrero and Montejo, in 1519, and a description of them was soon after published by Peter Martyr, the learned Italian who had long enjoyed the confidence of the Spanish court, and is well known for his friendship towards Columbus, and the interest he took in his voyages. A list of them is also contained in Gomara's Chronicles of New Spain. They consisted of the following specimens of Mexican art and *bijouterie* :—

A gold necklace composed of seven pieces, with a hundred and eighty-three small emeralds set in it, and two hundred and thirty-two gems similar to small rubies, from which hung twenty-seven little bells of gold, and some pearls.

Another necklace of four pieces of gold, with one hundred and two red gems like small rubies, one hundred and seventy-two emeralds, and ten fine pearls set in it, with twenty-six little bells of gold.*

Two wheels, one of gold with the image of the sun, and the other of silver with the image of the moon upon it ; both formed of plates of those metals, each twenty-eight hands in circum-

* "The gems most common among the Mexicans were emeralds, amethysts, cornelians, turquoises, and some others not known in Europe. * * * When Cortes returned the first time to Spain, (in 1528,) he brought along with him, amongst

ference, with various figures of animals and other things, in *basso relievo*, finished with great ingenuity and skill.*

A headpiece of wood carved with gold, and adorned with gems, from which hung twenty-five little bells of gold; instead of a plume it had a green bird with eyes, beak, and feet of gold.

A bracelet of gold. A little rod like a sceptre, with two rings of golds at its extremities, set with pearls.

Four tridents, adorned with feathers of various colors, with pearl points tied with gold thread.

Several shoes of the skin of the deer, sewed with gold thread, the soles of which were made of blue and white stones, of a brilliant appearance.

A shield of wood and leather, with little bells hanging to it, and covered with plates of gold in the middle, on which was cut the image of the god of war between four heads of a lion, a tiger, an eagle, and an owl, represented alive with their hair and feathers.

Several dressed skins of quadrupeds and birds with their plumage and hair.

Twenty-four curious and beautiful shields of gold, of feathers, and very small pearls, and four others of feathers and silver only.

Four fishes, two ducks, and some other birds, of molten gold.

Two sea-shells of gold, and a large crocodile girt with threads of gold.

A large mirror adorned with gold, and many small mirrors. Several mitres and crowns of feathers and gold, ornamented with pearls and gems.

other inestimable jewels, five emeralds, which, as Gomara, who was then living, bears testimony were valued at a hundred thousand ducats, and for one of them some Genoese merchants offered him forty thousand, in order to sell it again to the grand seignior; and also two emerald vases, valued as the celebrated P. Miariana, [in his History of Spain,] says, at 300,000 ducats." *Clavigero.* These five emeralds were exquisitely wrought by the Mexicans, at the order of Cortes, into various forms, and presented by him to his second wife, daughter of the count de Aguilar; jewels, says Gomara who saw them, superior to those of any other lady in Spain.

* The Mexicans represented their divisions of time by the figure of a wheel; Clavigero considers these to have been intended for that purpose.

Several large plumes of beautiful feathers of various colors, fretted with gold and small pearls.

Several fans of gold and feathers mixed together; others of feathers only, of different forms and sizes, but all most rich and elegant.*

A variety of cotton mantles, some all white, others checquered with white and black, or red, green, yellow, and blue; on the outside rough like a shaggy cloth, and within destitute of color or nap.

A number of underwaistcoats, handkerchiefs, counterpanes, tapestries, and carpets, of cotton.

The workmanship of these articles is described by Gomara as superior to the materials of which they were composed: "the colors of the cotton were extremely fine, and those of the feathers natural. In the art of casting metals the Mexican smiths far excel ours."

But what seems most to have attracted the attention of Peter Martyr was the existence of books amongst the Mexicans, of which several specimens were contained in the list of presents. He compares them to tablets made to fold together, consisting of a great number of leaves, which being connected might be stretched out to a considerable length. The characters were entirely unlike those of the European languages, but resembled Egyptian hieroglyphics.† The paper, he says, was made of the inner bark of a certain tree, bruised in a mortar, and mixed with a species of gum; but according to Gomara, it was formed of cotton and a species of paste, and sometimes of the leaves of the Metl, or American aloe.‡ A more modern writer, Clavigero, remarks, that he had seen several sheets of

* Count Carli, the celebrated author of "*Lettere Americane*," published at Florence, has the following description of a Mexican fan:—"I saw," he says, "at Strasburgh, in 1760, in the possession of Father Le Fevre, a Jesuit, and a man of great respectability, a very ancient Mexican fan, made of linen [cotton] as fine as the most beautiful muslin known. On it were depicted a number of figures forming a mosaic. Never have I beheld any thing so beautiful, both for the art with which the native and splendid colors of the feathers were disposed, and for the beauty of the design. No artist in Europe could have done as well."

† "Sunt characteres à nostris valde dissimiles; * * * Ægyptias fere formas æmulantur." "*De Insulis nuper inventis*," &c. p. 11. (Printed in 1521.)

‡ *Agave Americana.*

Mexican paper, which was similar to the pasteboard of Europe, but softer, smoother, and easy for writing.

In addition to these works of art, the deputies were accompanied in their mission to Spain by four Mexican nobles and two native women, who were exhibited to the emperor, and excited much interest. They are described by Martyr, who saw them, as being of a brownish color, ("*suffusca gens*,") and having jewels set in gold pendant from their ears; the men wearing besides similar ornaments suspended by an aperture through the nether lip The latter fashion he chracterizes as most unseemly, although the Indians regarded it as highly becoming. This interview took place at Tordesillas, in the north of Spain; and the emperor with great consideration directed the Mexicans to be taken to Seville in the south, where they would be less exposed to a change of climate.

LETTER II.

THE SECOND LETTER OR RELATION

SENT TO

HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR,

BY THE

CAPTAIN GENERAL OF NEW SPAIN,

HERNANDO CORTES,

In which he describes innumerable provinces and lands which have been lately discovered in Yucatan.

J. Cromberger. Sevilla, 1522.

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LETTERS OR DESPATCHES

OF

HERNANDO CORTES,

TO THE

EMPEROR CHARLES V.

LETTER II.

Dated at Segura de la Frontera, (Mexico,) Oct. 30th, 1520.

Most Noble, Powerful and Catholic Prince,
Invincible Emperor, and our Sovereign Lord:

By a ship that I despatched from this New Spain of your Sacred Majesty, on the sixteenth of July, in the year 1519, I transmitted to your Highness a very full and particular report of what had occurred from the time of my arrival in this country to that date; which I sent by the hands of Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, deputies of La Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz, the town I had founded in your Majesty's name. Since that time, from want of opportunity, and being constantly engaged in making conquests and establishing peace, having no ships, nor any intelligence from the one I had sent, or the deputies, I have not been able till now to give your Majesty a further account of our operations; from which God knows how much pain I

have suffered. I have been desirous that your Highness should be informed concerning the affairs of this country, because, as I have already mentioned in my former relation, such are its extent and importance, that the possession of it would authorize your Majesty to assume anew the title of Emperor, which it is no less worthy of conferring than Germany itself, which, by the grace of God, you already possess. But a detailed account of whatever presents itself deserving observation in these new regions would be almost endless; and I must beg your Majesty's pardon if my relation is less complete than it should be, owing to my want of ability, and the peculiar circumstances in which I am now placed. I shall nevertheless use my best efforts to relate the truth as nearly as possible, and to inform your Majesty of what it is important at the present juncture you should know. I must also entreat your Majesty's pardon if I should not mention every circumstance of any weight, or fail to give with great exactness the time and manner in which events may have occurred; or should I make mistakes in the names of the cities and towns, as well as provinces, that have professed their allegiance to your Majesty, and acknowledged themselves your subjects and vassals. For, in consequence of a disaster that has recently happened, of which I shall hereafter give your Highness a full account, I have lost all my papers, including the official records of my proceedings with the inhabitants of these countries, and many other things.

In my former despatch, Most Excellent Prince, I gave a list of the cities and towns that had to that time voluntarily submitted to your authority, together with those I had reduced by conquest. I also mentioned having received information from the natives of a certain great

Lord, called Muteczuma,* who, according to their computation of distances, dwelt ninety or a hundred leagues from the coast and the port where I had disembarked; and that, trusting in the greatness of God, and the confidence inspired by the royal name of your Highness, I proposed to go and see him wherever he might be. I also recollect having engaged to do more than was in my power in regard to the demand I intended to make of this personage; for I assured your Highness that he should be taken either dead or alive, or become a subject to the royal throne of your Majesty. With this determination I departed from the city of Cempoal, to which I gave the name of Sevilla, on the 16th of August, with fifteen horse and three hundred infantry, all in the best condition for war in which I was able, or the time permitted me to render them. I left in the town of Vera Cruz one hundred and fifty men and two horses, occupied in building a fort, which was already nearly finished; and I also left the whole province of Cempoal, and all the mountainous region adjacent to the town, containing fifty thousand warriors, and fifty towns and fortresses, in peace and security, and firm in their allegiance to your Majesty, as they have remained to the present time.† Although they were subjects of Muteczuma, yet according to the information I received, they had been reduced to that condition by force, within a short period; and when they had obtained through me some knowledge of your Highness, and of your great regal power, they declared their desire to become vassals of your Majesty,

* Thus the name is uniformly written by Cortes.

† Cempoal still retains the same name; it is situated four leagues from Vera Cruz, and the extent of its ruins indicates its former greatness. It must not be confounded with another Zempoal, in the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Mexico, twelve leagues distant from the former.—L.

and to form an alliance with me. They also begged me to protect them against that mighty Lord, who used violent and tyrannical measures to keep them in subjection, and took from them their sons to be slain and offered as sacrifices to his idols; with many other complaints against him, in order to avoid whose tyranny they embraced the service of your Majesty, to which they have so far proved faithful, and I doubt not will continue so, since they have been uniformly treated by me with favor and attention. Nevertheless, for the better security of our people who remained at Vera Cruz, I took with me several of their principal men, and some of an inferior order, who have been of no little service to me on my route.

I informed your Majesty, I believe, in my former despatch, that some of those persons that accompanied me, who had been servants and friends of Diego Velazquez, were jealous of what I had accomplished in the service of your Highness; and even sought to create disaffection in our ranks, and compel me to abandon the country. The leaders in this business were four Spaniards, namely: Juan Escudero, Diego Cermeño, a pilot, Gonzalo de Ungria, also a pilot, and Alonso Peñate, who, as they voluntarily confessed, had determined to seize a brigantine then in port, put on board a large quantity of bread and pork, and after killing the master, to sail for the island of Fernandina, [Cuba,] for the purpose of informing Diego Velazquez that I had despatched a ship to your Majesty, with the names of those who had sailed in it, and the route it had taken, to enable him to send vessels in pursuit and capture it. This he afterwards attempted; as I have been informed that he despatched a caravel after the ship, which he would have taken if it had not passed

on the outside.* They also confessed that others had been desirous of sending information to Diego Velazquez. Upon their confessions, I punished the delinquents as justice, the necessity of the case, and the service of your Highness required. But besides those who from having been the servants and friends of Velazquez wished to leave the country, there were others that entered into the same views, on beholding the great number and power of the people of the country, while the Spaniards were so few and inconsiderable. Believing, therefore, that if I left the ships there they would mutiny, and all be induced to depart, leaving me almost alone, and by this means the great service rendered to God and your Majesty be made of no avail; I determined, under the pretext that the ships were not seaworthy, to cause them to be stranded on the coast; thus taking away all hope of leaving the country, I pursued my route with greater feelings of security, having no fears that after our backs were turned the people I had left at Vera Cruz would desert me.

Eight or ten days after the ships were stranded, having gone from Vera Cruz towards the city of Cempoal, which is four leagues distant, in order to proceed from thence on my route, I received intelligence from the former place that four ships had arrived on the coast, and that the captain I had left in command there had gone out to them in a boat, when he was told they belonged to Francisco de Garay, Lieutenant and Governor of the island of Jamaica, and had come on a voyage of discovery. The captain informed them that I had founded a colony in the country, in the name of your Highness,

* That is, to the north of Cuba, through the Bahama Channel.

and built a town one league from where the ships lay; adding that he would accompany them to the place and apprise me of their arrival; and that if their ships were in want of repairs, they could be made in the harbor, to which he would pilot them in his boat; at the same time pointing out where it was. They replied, that they had already seen the harbor, having passed before it, and would do as he suggested. The captain then returned with his boat, but the ships had not followed, nor entered the harbor; they had, however, sailed along the coast, and the captain was at a loss to know their design; he had, therefore, made me acquainted with the circumstances. I immediately returned to Vera Cruz, where I learned that the ships lay at anchor on the coast three leagues below, and that no one had landed from them. I then went down to the shore with a number of men to reconnoitre the ships, and having got within about a league of them I met three of their men, amongst whom was one that styled himself a notary; he had taken the other two with him, as he told me, to witness a certain notification which the captain required him to serve on me, and which he had brought there for the purpose, setting forth a certain claim on his part; the substance of it was, that he had discovered this country and intended to colonize it; he therefore required that I should establish with him a line of demarcation; and that he proposed to make a settlement at a place five leagues down the coast near the former Nautical, a city twelve leagues from Vera Cruz, now called Almeria.

I answered, that the captain must come with his ships to the port of Vera Cruz, where we would talk together, and I should understand better the purpose he had in view: that if he was in want of any thing for his ships

or men, I would supply him as far as it was in my power; and since he had declared that he had come in the service of your Sacred Majesty, I added that I desired nothing more than to promote the service of your Highness to the utmost extent of my ability, and that by aiding him I believed I should do so. They replied, that neither their captain nor any of his people could be induced to come on shore at any place where I might be. Believing that they must have done some wrong in the country, as they feared to come into my presence, as soon as it was dark I took a position in the most secret manner near the sea-coast, opposite where the ships rode at anchor, and there I remained until nearly the middle of the next day, expecting the captain or pilot to come on shore, from whom I might ascertain what they had done, and what places they had visited, intending if I discovered that they had been guilty of any illegal acts, to send them to your Sacred Majesty; but neither they nor any other persons landed from the ships. Finding that they would not come on shore, I caused the men who had sought to serve me with the notification, to exchange clothes with the same number of Spaniards in my party, and I sent the latter to the shore, and directed them to call aloud to the ships. As soon as they were discovered, a boat containing ten or twelve men, armed with cross-bows and handguns, came to land, and the Spaniards who had called to them, withdrew from the shore behind some bushes that grew about there, as if for shade. Four men leaped on shore from the boat, two cross-bowmen, and two musketeers, who were immediately surrounded by the Spaniards, and taken prisoners. One of them was master of a ship, who applied the match to his handgun and would have slain the captain

that had been stationed by me at Vera Cruz, if it had not pleased our Lord that the match should not give fire. The men who remained in the boat put off from the shore, but before they reached the ships the sails were already set, without waiting for them, or those on board desiring to know what had become of them. I was informed by the prisoners I had taken, that they had reached a river thirty leagues along the coast, after passing Almeria, where they had met with a favorable reception from the natives, who supplied them with provisions in the way of barter; and that they had seen some gold which the Indians brought, although in small quantities: they obtained in all about 3000 castellanos of gold* in trade. That they did not land upon the coast, but approached the towns on the banks of the river so near as to be able to distinguish the people from the ships. That they had no stone edifices, but all their houses were of thatch, excepting that the ground on which they were built was raised to a considerable height by the labor of the hand. All of this I subsequently learned more fully from the great Lord Muteczuma, and from certain interpreters of that country that he had with him; whom, together with an Indian brought in those ships from that river, and taken prisoner by me, I sent with other messengers from Muteczuma, that they might induce the sovereign of the river, which is called Panuco, to enter the service of your Sacred Majesty. And he sent them back to me with a principal person, or as they termed him, the Lord of a town; who gave me on his part certain cloth, precious stones, and feather-work, and said that he and all his people were willing to be the subjects of your Majesty and my allies. I made him presents of various articles

* The castellano is an ancient Spanish coin, about $2 75 in value.

from Spain, with which he was greatly pleased, so much so, that when he saw other ships of the abovementioned Francisco de Garay, (of whom I shall hereafter give your Majesty some account,) the said Lord of Panuco sent to inform me that those ships were in another river, five or six days journey from thence; at the same time he gave them to understand that if the persons in the ships were countrymen of mine, he would give them whatever they wanted; and accordingly carried them some women, together with chickens and other articles of food.

I was three days, most powerful Sire, in passing through the country and dominion of Cempoal, where I was well received and hospitably entertained by all the inhabitants. On the fourth day I entered a province called Sienchimalen, in which there is a very strong town, occupying a commanding situation on one side of a rocky sierra, accessible only by a single passage, which it is impossible to penetrate except on foot, and even then with great difficulty if the natives should wish to defend the pass. In the open country there are many villages and hamlets, consisting of two, three, or five hundred families, which contain altogether five or six thousand warriors; and these are under the authority of Muteczuma. They received me here very favorably, and supplied in the most liberal manner the necessary provision for my route. At the same time they informed me that they knew I was going to see Muteczuma their sovereign, and added that he was certainly my friend, having sent them instructions to give me a good reception, as in so doing they would promote his service. I made a suitable acknowledgment of their civility, saying that your Majesty had possessed some knowledge of Muteczuma, and had ordered me to visit

him, but that I was going for no other purpose than to see him. And then I entered a mountain pass which is at the extremity of this province, to which we gave the name of the Pass of the Name of God,* as it was the first we had met with in this region. It is so rough and steep that there is not one so difficult in all Spain. I went through it in safety and without encountering any obstruction. At its foot there are other hamlets, belonging to a town and fort called Ceyconacan,† which was also subject to Muteczuma. We were equally well received here as at Sienchimalen; and the people told us, as the others had done, that such was the pleasure of Muteczuma. I made them also a similar acknowledgment for their kindness.

From thence I travelled three days through a country destitute of inhabitants, and, indeed, scarcely habitable on account of the sterility of the soil, the want of water, and the coldness of the climate; God knows how much our people suffered there from hunger and thirst, especially during a violent storm of hail and rain which we encountered, when I thought many would perish with cold. We had already lost several Indians from the island of Fernandina, [Cuba,] who were not well clothed. At the end of these three days we met with another mountain pass,‡ not, however, so steep as the former, and at its summit there was a tower, small almost as an oratory, and which contained several idols, and around it were more than a thousand cart-loads of wood compactly arranged, on account of which we gave it the name of the Pass of Wood. Below this pass, between very rough mountains, there was a populous valley, whose

* El Puerto del Nombre de Dios. † Now Yshuacan de los Reyes.—L.
‡ Supposed to be Sierra del Agua.—L.

inhabitants seemed to be poor; and after having marched two leagues through their country without knowing any thing of them, I reached a place somewhat more level, where the Lord of the Valley appeared to have his residence, as the houses were larger and better built than any we had before met with in the country, being all composed of hewn stone and apparently new; and they contained many very large and handsome halls and apartments elegantly finished. The people and valley were called Caltanmi. I was well received and lodged here by the lord and his people. After having addressed him on the part of your Majesty, and stated the cause of my coming into these parts, I inquired of him if he was a subject of Muteczuma, or whether he belonged to another jurisdiction. He answered as if astonished at my question, by asking, "Who is not a subject of Muteczuma?" As much as to say that he was the sovereign of the world. I replied by describing the great power and wide sway of your Majesty, to whom many other sovereigns more powerful than Muteczuma were subject, esteeming it for their advantage to be so; and that thus Muteczuma and all the inhabitants of this country would find it to be; that this would be required of them, and should they yield obedience, they would be honored and favored; if not, they would be punished. And in order that I might have some evidence of his homage, I requested him to furnish me with some gold that I might send it to your Majesty. He replied that he had gold,* but he must receive the orders of Muteczuma before he

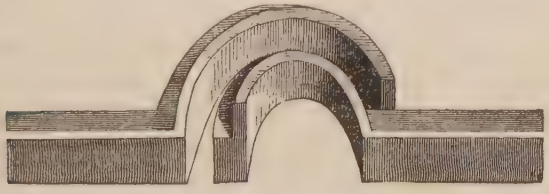
* The gold that the Indians sent in small quantities as a tribute to their sovereign, was obtained by them from the sands of the rivers, or collected from the surface of the earth; but the process of working the mines as practised at the present day, was introduced by the Spaniards.—L.

parted with it; and if he commanded him he would give me the gold, his own person, and whatever else he possessed. In order not to compromise myself nor throw obstacles in the way of my designs or my journey, I dissembled as well as I could, and remarked to him that he would soon receive orders from Muteczuma to give me the gold, and whatever else he had.

There came to meet me here two other Caciques, whose lands were in the same valley, the one four leagues below, and the other two leagues above. They gave me several chains of gold of small weight and value, and seven or eight slaves. Leaving them very well satisfied, I set off, after having remained there four or five days, and arrived at the residence of the Cacique mentioned as being two leagues distant in the upper part of the valley; it is called Yztecmastitán.* The domains of this man are covered with inhabitants for three or four leagues without interruption, and are situated along the level ground of the valley on the banks of a small river that flows through it. His residence stands on a lofty eminence, protected by a larger fortress than is found in half of Spain, which is well defended by walls, barbacans and moats; on the summit of this high ground there is a population of five or six thousand, dwelling in good houses, and a somewhat richer people than those who inhabit the valley below. Here, likewise, I was well received, and the Cacique told me that he was a vassal of Muteczuma. I remained here three days, as well to recruit from the effects of our journey through the desert country, as to wait for four messengers, natives of Cempoal, that had accompanied me, whom I had sent from Caltanmi to a very extensive province called Tascalteca,†

* Now called *Yxtacamaxtillan.*—L. † Now *Tlascala.*

which they informed me was near this place, as it proved to be. I had also been informed by them that the natives of this province were their allies, but deadly enemies of Muteczuma; and they desired me to form an alliance with them, because they were a numerous and powerful nation. Their country, they also added, bordered upon that of Muteczuma throughout its whole extent, with whom they were constantly at war; and it was thought they would be pleased with me, and take my part in case Muteczuma should endeavor to get the advantage of me. The messengers did not return during the eight days that I remained in the valley, and I asked some other Cempoallans who accompanied me why they did not return? They answered that the place must be very far off, and that they could not get back yet on account of the distance. Seeing that they did not arrive, and being assured by several leading Cempoallans of the friendship and protection of the people of that province, I resolved to set out on my way thither.



On leaving the valley, I met with a large wall of dry stone about nine feet in height, which extended across the valley from one mountain to the other; it was twenty feet in thickness and surmounted throughout its whole extent by a breastwork a foot and a half thick, to enable them to fight from the top of the wall. There was but one entrance, about ten paces wide, where one portion of the wall was encircled by the other, in the manner of

a ravelin, for about forty paces. Thus the entrance was circuitous, and not direct. Having inquired the object of this wall, I was informed that it was erected on account of this place being the frontiers of the province of Tascalteca, [Tlascala,] whose inhabitants were enemies of Muteczuma and always at war with him.* The natives of this valley begged me, since I was going to visit Muteczuma their sovereign, that I would not pass through the territory of his enemies, as perchance they might prove unfriendly and do me much injury; and promised to conduct me through the dominions of Muteczuma without at any time leaving his jurisdiction, where we should be always well received. But the Cempoallans bade me do no such thing; assuring me that they had given this advice in order to divert me from the friendship of that province; and that the people of Muteczuma were all of a designing and treacherous character, and would lead me into places from which I should be unable to extricate myself. I followed the advice of the Cempoallans, as I had formed a more favorable opinion of them than of the others; and, accordingly, I pursued the route to Tascalteca, proceeding with all the caution in my power. Taking six horsemen, I rode in advance half a league and more; not thinking of what I was about to encounter, but for the purpose of reconnoitering the country, and ascertaining if there was any obstacle to my progress, that I might have time to concert the necessary measures and get the people in readiness.

* The length of this wall was six miles. Bernal Dias says, that the stones of which it was composed were united by a bitumen so strong that it was necessary to use pick-axes to separate them. See also Clavigero, book vii. sec. 26.

CHAPTER II.

After having advanced four leagues, as we approached a hill two of the horsemen who rode before me espied several Indians wearing plumes, as was their custom in war, and provided with swords and shields, who as soon as they discovered the horsemen began to fly. When I had come up, I ordered them to be called back, with the assurance that they might return and have nothing to fear. I went towards them and found there were fifteen Indians, who, closing together, began to handle their weapons and call out to the rest of their people who were in the valley ; and they fought with such determination that they finally killed two of our horses and wounded three others, together with two horsemen. Thereupon the others sallied forth, to the number of four or five thousand Indians. Eight of the cavalry had already joined me, exclusive of those whose horses had been killed, and we continued the conflict until reinforced by the Spaniards, for whom I had despatched one of the horsemen. In the mean time we had done them some injury, having killed fifty or sixty of their number without any corresponding loss on our part, although they fought with great courage and spirit ; but as we were all on horseback we attacked them with safety to ourselves, and fell back in the same manner. When they saw our reinforcement approaching they retired, although our number was small, and left us in possession of the field. After they had gone, there came several messengers, who informed us that they were the rulers of this province ; they were also accompanied by two of the messengers that I had

sent, who assured me that these men knew nothing of what had taken place; that it had proceeded from the common people, who had acted without authority from them; and that they were grieved and would pay for the horses that had been killed, being desirous of becoming our friends; and that we should be well received by them as soon as an opportunity offered. I answered them that I acknowledged their kindness and would consider them as friends, and proceed according to their advice. The same night I was compelled to sleep on the banks of a rivulet, one league in advance of the battle-ground, both on account of the lateness of the hour and the fatigue of the troops. I remained there with the utmost caution, stationing a watch and guard both of horse and foot until it was daylight, when I took up the line of march, having placed in order of battle the vanguard and main body, preceded by the runners. Having reached a small settlement just as the sun was rising, the two other messengers came in with lamentations, saying that they had been bound for the purpose of being put to death, but that they had made their escape in the night. And not two stones' throw from them a great number of Indians began to appear, well armed and uttering loud cries, and commenced an attack upon our people, discharging many darts and arrows. I undertook to make a formal appeal to them through the interpreters that I had brought with me instead of a notary. But the more I delayed for the purpose of reasoning with them and inducing peace, the more eager they seemed to give us all the annoyance in their power. Seeing that they did not regard our overtures, we endeavored to defend ourselves as well as we could; and thus they drew us on while engaged in fighting, until we found ourselves

in the midst of more than one hundred thousand warriors, who surrounded us on all sides; the battle lasted the whole day until an hour before sunset, when they drew off. In this contest, with six pieces of ordnance, five or six handguns, forty archers and thirteen horse, that remained with me, I did them much injury, without suffering from them any other inconvenience than the labor and fatigue of fighting and hunger. And it truly seemed that God fought on our side, since with such a multitude of the enemy opposed to us, who discovered so great courage and skill in the use of arms, of which they had many kinds, we nevertheless came off unhurt. The same night I took up my quarters in a tower of idols that stood on a hill; and before daylight I left in the camp two hundred men and all the artillery; and in order to attack the enemy, I sallied forth with the horse and a hundred foot, together with four hundred Indians who had accompanied me from Cempoal, and three hundred from Yztacmestilan. Before they had time to collect their forces I destroyed five or six small villages of a hundred houses each, and took four hundred prisoners, including men and women. I then returned to the camp, fighting my way, but without suffering any loss. Afterwards, at daylight, more than one hundred and forty-nine thousand men, who covered the land, made an attack in so determined a manner upon our camp, that some of them forced an entrance and engaged the Spaniards at the point of the sword; when it pleased our Lord to afford us his aid to such a degree, that in four hours they no longer annoyed us in our camp, although they still continued their attacks. And thus we were engaged in fighting until evening, when the enemy at length drew off.

The next day I again sallied forth—though in a different direction, before it was light, without being observed by the enemy—with the horse, a hundred foot, and the friendly Indians, when I destroyed more than ten towns, one of which contained about three thousand houses, where we encountered the town's-people alone, the forces of the enemy not being present. As we carried the banner of the cross,* and fought for our faith and in the service of your Sacred Majesty, God in his glorious providence gave us so great a victory, that we destroyed many people without ourselves receiving any injury. Early in the afternoon, when the forces of the enemy were yet assembled from all quarters, we returned victorious to our camp. The following day there came messengers from the leading men, saying that they wished to become the vassals of your Highness, and my allies, and begged that I would pardon their past errors. They brought with them a quantity of provisions, and certain ornaments of feathers, held in high esteem among them. I answered them, that they had done wrong, but I was willing to be their friend, and to overlook their past actions. The next day there arrived about fifty Indians, who appeared to be persons of high standing among their countrymen, and declared that they had come to bring us provisions; at the same time they examined carefully the passages leading to and from our camp, and certain huts we had erected for barracks. The Cempoallans came to me and said it was easy to see that these men were enemies, and had come as spies to find out how they could injure us,

* One of the banners carried by Cortes is deposited in the office of the Secretary of the Government, and the other is in the Church of St. Francis, in Mexico; the first represents the Virgin Mary, painted on damask, and the other, the cross.—L.

and assured me that their visit was for no other purpose. I then caused one of them to be taken aside without the knowledge of the others, and retiring with him and the interpreters, I endeavored to compel him by threats to disclose the truth. He then confessed that Sintengal, [Xicotencatl] who was the Captain General of this Province, had taken a position behind the hills that were in front of the camp, with a numerous force, for the purpose of attacking us that night; as they said that they had already tried an attack by day without any good effect, and they now desired to make the attempt by night, when their people would not have occasion to fear our horses, guns, or swords; that he had accordingly sent them to observe our camp and the means of access to it, and how they could best destroy the huts of straw. Afterwards I took aside another of the Indians, and made similar inquiries, when he confessed almost in the same words as the other; and I did the same with five or six others, all of whom confirmed the former statements. Seeing this, I ordered the fifty to be seized, and their hands to be cut off, and sent them back to their leader with this message: that both by night and day, and whenever he might come, they would see what we were. I then fortified my tent according to the best of my power, and placed my men within the works in the best manner possible, and thus was on my guard until sunset. As soon as it was dark the enemy began to descend through two valleys, thinking that they would come upon us unawares, and surround us, in order to execute their purpose, not knowing that I was so well informed of their movements. It seemed to me that to suffer them to reach the camp might be attended with danger, because at night they would be less intimidated

from not seeing our means of defence; and also that some of our men, not seeing the enemy, might be less resolute in fighting; and I feared, too, that our works might be set on fire—in which case, besides the loss of our effects, none of our people could escape. I resolved, therefore, to sally forth to meet the enemy with all our cavalry, in order to arrest their progress, or by throwing them into confusion to prevent their reaching the camp. And thus it turned out, that when they perceived us advancing against them with our cavalry, they fled with haste and in silence behind the fields of maize with which the country was filled, and abandoned the provisions they had brought for the purpose of making a feast of rejoicing in case they had succeeded in utterly destroying us. Thus they fled, and we remained in security that night. After this occurrence, I continued several days in camp, going but a short distance beyond its immediate precincts for the purpose of stopping the approach of some Indians, who came shouting towards us to provoke a skirmish.

Having enjoyed some repose, I made another descent upon the enemy by night, after going the rounds of the guards in the first quarter. I took with me one hundred foot, our Indian allies, and the cavalry; but at the distance of a league from the camp five of my horses gave out, and finding it impossible to urge them forward, I sent them back. Although all of the men wished me to return, considering this as a bad omen, I nevertheless pursued my route, with the reflection that God is over all. Before daylight I attacked several towns, containing a large population; but I did not destroy the houses lest the fire should alarm the other people who dwelt in the neighborhood. When the day had already dawned

I attacked another place, which was so large that it contained, according to an examination that I caused to be made, more than twenty thousand houses. As I came upon it by surprise, the inhabitants rushed unarmed into the streets, the women and children being in a state of nudity, and we had begun to attack them when I discovered that they made no resistance, and certain of their leaders came to beg that I would stop hostilities, as they were desirous of becoming the vassals of your Highness and my allies. They confessed that they had done wrong in not having before placed confidence in me, but declared that henceforth I should see them willing to execute whatever I commanded in your Majesty's name, as your true and faithful liege subjects. Immediately there joined me more than four thousand persons unarmed, and at a fountain outside of the town they brought us an abundance of provisions. Thus I left them in peace and returned to our camp, where I found the people who had remained very much alarmed, imagining that I had encountered great danger, in consequence of the return of the horses the night before. But when informed of the victory which it had pleased God to grant us, and that we had made friends of so many of the inhabitants, they were greatly rejoiced. Notwithstanding, I assure your Majesty, that there was scarcely one of us who did not feel some apprehension on finding ourselves so far in the interior of the country, and in the midst of so numerous and powerful a people, without hope of succour from any quarter. So desperate was our situation, that I heard with my own ears the remark made among our men, in almost a public manner, that I was a Peter Carbonero, who had brought them into dangers from which they could not escape. And I even

heard it said in a hut where several lodged together, (being where they could not see me,) that I was without doubt a madman, and would plunge myself into difficulties from which I could not be extricated; that they should return to the sea, and if I chose to accompany them, well—but if not, they would leave me behind. And oftentimes I was entreated to return with renewed importunity, when I revived their courage by exhorting them to reflect, that they were the subjects of your Highness, and Spaniards had never been known to falter in their allegiance; that we had it in our power to acquire for your Majesty greater kingdoms and provinces than were to be found in any other part of the world. And besides, we were only doing what as Christians we were under obligations to do, by warring against the enemies of our faith—by which means we secured to ourselves glory in another world, and gained greater honor and rewards in this life than had fallen to the lot of any other generation at any former period; that they should also reflect that God was on our side, and that to him nothing is impossible, as they might see in the victories we had gained, when so many of the enemy were killed without any loss on our part. These and similar things I said to them, by means of which, and the royal favor of your Highness, they recovered their spirits, and were induced to do what I desired, in order to complete what I had already begun.

At ten o'clock on the following day, Sicutengal, [Xicotencatl], Captain General of this Province, with about fifty of the principal persons belonging to it, came to me and solicited on the part of himself and of Magiscatzin,* who is the most important personage of the whole pro-

* Governor of the Republic of Tlascala.

vince, and on behalf of many other caziques or chiefs, that I would admit them into the royal service of your Highness, and to my friendship, and would pardon their past errors, as they had not known us, nor understood who we were; adding that they had already exerted their utmost strength, both by day and night, to avoid becoming subject to any power whatever; for at no period had this province ever been so, nor did it now own, nor had it at any former time acknowledged, a master; that they had lived free and unrestrained from time immemorial to the present moment; that they had always successfully defended themselves against the great power of Muteczuma, and his father and ancestors, who had subjected the whole earth, but had never been able to reduce them to subjection, although they had hemmed them in on all sides, so that there was no passage left for them out of their own territory; that they were deprived of the use of salt,* because it was not produced in any part of their country, nor were they able to go and procure it elsewhere; and for the same reason they were destitute of cotton cloth, as the cotton plant does not grow with them on account of the coldness of the climate, as well as of many other things of which they were in want, by reason of their being confined within such narrow limits. Nevertheless, they preferred to suffer these privations, and considered it better for them, in order to enjoy their freedom and be subject to no one; and that in regard to myself, their feelings were

* The salt which the Indians use is called by them Tequesquit; it is saltpetre, and is gathered on the surface of the ground at the present day for the same purpose, and also to be converted into gunpowder. An extensive commerce is carried on in this salt by the Mexicans of Yxtapaluca and Yxtapalapa, which means the places where salt or *Yxtatl* is gathered; and at this day the people of Yxtapalapa are thus occupied.—L.

the same; but that as they had already declared, they had tried their strength, and saw clearly that neither the force nor the skill that they had been able to command, profited them any thing, and they now sought to become the subjects of your Highness rather than perish and doom to destruction their houses, their women, and their children. I satisfied them by saying, that they well knew the losses they had sustained were entirely owing to themselves; that I had entered their territory in the belief that I was coming among friends, for the Cempoallans had assured me they were so, and wished to be so; and that I had sent in advance my messengers to inform them that I was coming, and of the pleasure their friendship would afford me; and that without returning me any answer, while I was approaching with apparent security, they had attacked me on the road, killed two of my horses, and wounded others; and moreover, after fighting with me they had sent messengers, saying, that what had taken place was contrary to their wishes and consent, certain communities having made the movement without their participation, but that they had reproved them for it, and desired my friendship. Believing this to be true, I had told them that it gave me pleasure, and that on the next day I would visit them in their abodes as friends; and yet they had attacked me while on the way, and fought against me the whole day until the approach of night, notwithstanding I had earnestly desired peace. I also reminded them of all they had done to oppose my progress, and many other matters, which I omit to mention that I may not weary your Highness. Finally, they remained, and acknowledged themselves as subjects and vassals of your Majesty, offering their persons and their estates for your royal

service. This they carried into effect, and have remained faithful to the present time; and I believe they will always continue so, as your Majesty will hereafter see.

I remained in my quarters and camp for six or seven days, as I dared not trust them; but when they invited me to visit a large city* in which resided all the principal men of the province, who came to urge me to make them a visit, saying that I should be better received and more abundantly supplied with what was necessary there than in camp; and when they expressed their mortification that I should be so poorly lodged, considering me as a friend, and themselves as well as myself subjects of your Highness: in compliance with their request I went to the city, which was six leagues from my quarters and camp. This city is so extensive and so well worthy of admiration, that although I omit much that I could say of it, I feel assured that the little I shall say will be scarcely credited, since it is larger than Granada, and much stronger, and contains as many fine houses and a much larger population than that city did at the time of its capture; and it is much better supplied with the products of the earth, such as corn, and with fowls and game, fish from the rivers, various kinds of vegetables, and other excellent articles of food. There is in this city a market, in which every day thirty thousand people are engaged in buying and selling, beside many other merchants who are scattered about the city. The market contains a great variety of articles both of food and clothing, and all kinds of shoes for the feet; jewels of gold and silver, and precious stones, and ornaments of feathers, all as well arranged as they can possibly be

* It still bears the name of Tlascala, though much decayed.

found in any public squares or markets in the world. There is much earthenware of every style and a good quality, equal to the best of Spanish manufacture.* Wood, coal, edible and medicinal plants, are sold in great quantities. There are houses where they wash and shave the head as barbers, and also for baths. Finally, there is found among them a well regulated police; the people are rational and well disposed, and altogether greatly superior to the most civilized African nation. The country abounds in level and beautiful valleys, all tilled and sown, without any part lying unimproved. In its constitution of government that has existed until the present time, it resembles the states of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa; since the supreme authority is not reposed in one person. There are many nobles, all of whom reside in the city; the common people are laborers, and the vassals of the nobility, but each one possesses land of his own, some more than others. In war all unite and have a voice in its management and direction. It may be supposed that they have tribunals of justice for the punishment of the guilty; since when one of the natives of the province stole some gold of a Spaniard, and I mentioned the circumstance to Magiscacin, the most powerful of the nobility, they made search for the thief, and traced him to a city in the neighborhood called Churultecal [Cholula], from whence they brought him prisoner, and delivered him to me with the gold, saying that I must have him punished. I acknowledged in suitable terms the pains they had taken in the matter, but remarked to them that since the prisoner was in their country, they

* At this day earthenware is manufactured in the province of La Puebla, and it is the most highly prized for common use of any in the kingdom; and in Guadalaxara are made earthen vessels of so elegant workmanship, that on special occasions they are exported to Spain.—L.

should punish him according to their custom, and that I chose not to interfere with the punishment of their people while I remained among them. They thanked me, and taking the man, carried him to the great market, a town crier making public proclamation of his offence; they then placed him at the base of a structure resembling a theatre, which stands in the midst of the market-place, while the crier went to the top of the building and with a loud voice again proclaimed his offence; whereupon the people beat him with sticks until he was dead. We likewise saw many persons in prison who were said to be confined for theft and other offences they had committed. There are in this province, according to a report made by my orders, five hundred thousand inhabitants, besides those in another small province adjacent to this, called Guazincango,* who live in the same manner, not subject to any native sovereign, and are not less the vassals of your Highness than the people of Tascalteca [Tlascala].

During the time I was at war with this province, Most Catholic Sire, and while I was yet in camp, there came to me six lords, the principal vassals of Muteczuma, with about two hundred men in their train, and assured me that they came on the part of Muteczuma to inform me that he desired to become a subject of your Highness, and my friend; and to satisfy me of the sincerity of his professions, he would yield to your Highness every year a tribute of gold and silver, precious stones, slaves, and cotton cloth, and such other things as he had; that he would give all this, but that he desired I would not visit his dominions, because the country was very barren and destitute of the necessaries of life, and he should regret

* Also written Huajocingo, and Huexotzinco; a small republic.

the privations that I and those who came with me would have to endure. He sent to me by the same persons almost a thousand *pesos* of gold, and large pieces of cotton cloth of the kind they wore. They remained with me during a great part of the war, until its close, and saw what the Spaniards were capable of doing; they also knew the terms on which this province made peace with us, and the professions of allegiance to your Majesty on the part of the nobles and the whole land, as it appeared; but they showed no signs of pleasure at these things, and labored in every possible way to prejudice me against this people, saying that there was no confidence to be placed in what they told me, nor any sincerity in their professions of friendship, which were only made to lull me into security, so that they could betray me with impunity. On the other hand, the inhabitants of this province would often caution me not to trust these vassals of Muteczuma, for they were traitors, and always acted treacherously and artfully, by which means they had subjugated the whole earth; and they warned me as true friends, and as persons who had long known those men, to beware of them. I was not a little pleased on seeing their want of harmony, as it seemed favorable to my designs, and would enable me to bring them more easily into subjection, according to the common saying, *De Monte, &c.* I likewise applied to this case the authority of the Evangelist, who says, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be rendered desolate;" and I dissembled with both parties, expressing privately my acknowledgments to both for the advice they gave me, and giving to each of them credit for more friendship towards me than I experienced from the other.

After I had been twenty days or more in this city,

certain nobles, messengers of Muteczuma, who had been with me for some time, desired that I should visit a city six leagues distant from Tascaltecatl, called Churultecal, [Cholula,] because its inhabitants were friends of Muteczuma their sovereign, and that we should there learn his pleasure, whether I should be permitted to enter his dominions, and that some of their number in the mean time would go and confer with him for the purpose of informing him what I had said and return with his answer. Although they knew that messengers from Muteczuma had come to communicate with me, I promised them I would go and would set out on a particular day, which I designated. As soon as it was known to the Tlascalans that I had consented to accompany them to that city, the nobles came to me with much sorrow, and said that I must by no means go there, for they had formed treacherous designs to destroy me and my people in that city, and that for this purpose Muteczuma had despatched from his country (a part of which was adjacent to that city) fifty thousand men whom he kept in garrison two leagues from the city, as they showed, and that they had blocked up the royal road by which they were accustomed to go and made a new one full of pits, and sharp stakes driven into the good and covered up, for the purpose of disabling the horses; that they had placed obstructions in many of the streets, and heaps of stones on the flat roofs of their houses, that after we had entered their city in seeming security they might take us by surprise and do with us as they pleased; that if I wished to have proofs of the correctness of their statements, I might notice that none of the nobles of that city had come to see me or to speak with me, although I was so near, but that a deputation had come for that purpose

from Guasincaugo, which was farther off, and that I might send for the former and learn why they had not seen fit to come. I thanked them for their caution, and requested that they would furnish me with persons to send on this errand, to see why the people of that city had not come. They did so, and I sent to ask the nobles of Cholula to make me a visit, as I wished to confer with them on behalf of your Majesty, and to set forth the causes of my arrival in this quarter. The messengers departed and gave my message to the nobles of that city, and there came back with them two or three persons of no great importance, who said they had come on behalf of those lords, as they were ill, and that I might say what I desired to them. The Tlascalans assured me it was all a farce, and that the messengers were people of little standing, adding that I must not think of going there unless the nobles of the city came to see me. I addressed myself to these messengers, and said that having been sent as the ambassador of so powerful a prince as your sacred Majesty, I could not recognise such persons as them, and that even their greatest men were scarcely worthy of receiving my attention; therefore the latter must, within three days, appear before me to profess allegiance to your Highness and submit themselves as your vassals, with the warning that if they did not come before I had passed their borders, I should march against them and destroy them as rebels who refused to submit to the government of your Majesty. And to this end I sent them a requisition, subscribed with my name and by the hands of a notary, with a full description of your sacred Majesty's royal person and of my arrival, stating to them that all these countries, and other lands of even greater extent, belonged to your Highness; that those

who chose to become your subjects were honored and favored, but those who rebelled were punished as justice required. The next day nearly all of the nobles of that city came, and declared to me, that if they had not appeared before, the reason was that the people of this province were their enemies, and that they dared not enter their territory, as it was dangerous for them; and that they fully believed the Tlascalans had spoken of them in such a way as to prevent my giving them credit, for they had spoken as enemies and not according to the truth; that I should visit their city, where I would learn the falsity of what those persons had told me and the truth of their own statements; that from henceforth they would do homage as vassals of your sacred Majesty, and would ever remain so, rendering service and contributing whatever your Highness should command them; to all which the notary, through my interpreters, took their formal acknowledgment. I determined to go with them, as well for the purpose of showing no weakness as because from their city I thought it would be easier to communicate with Muteczuma, since it adjoins his dominions, as I have already stated, and the people of both places were in the habit of coming and going to and from that city, there being no examination or search of travellers.

When the Tlascalans saw my determination it grieved them much, and they repeatedly said to me, that I had committed an error; but that since they had become the vassals of your Majesty and my friends, they would accompany me and give me their assistance in whatever was required. But when I protested against their going, and begged that they would think of it, as there was no necessity for it, they nevertheless followed me with a force of one hundred thousand men well versed in war, and

attended me within two leagues of the city, when upon my urgent entreaty they returned, leaving with me, however, five or six thousand men. I slept near a rivulet, which was two leagues from the city, in order to send back the people that they might give no offence in the city, and likewise because it was already evening and I did not wish to enter the city at night. The next morning the people came forth from the city to receive me on the road, with many trumpets and kettle-drums, and a great number of priests, clothed in their customary robes, and singing as they are wont to do in their temples. In this solemn manner they escorted us into the city and assigned us excellent quarters, in which all my people were comfortably lodged. They also supplied us with provisions, though not in a bountiful manner. On the road we fell in with many of those marks of which we had been forewarned by the Tlascalans; for we found the royal road blocked up and a new one opened, and also pits, though not many, and several streets of the city obstructed, and many piles of stones on the tops of the houses. These things placed us more on our guard and led us to exercise greater caution.

I met there several envoys of Muteczuma, who had come to confer with those that had been with me; and they told me that they had only come to ascertain what the others had done and agreed upon, in order that they might return and report to their master. They accordingly departed, after having conferred with their countrymen, and the principal one of those that had been with me returned at the same time. During the three days that I was there, they provided very poorly for our wants, and each day worse than the former one; and the nobles and principal men of the city very seldom

came to see or to speak to me. Being somewhat perplexed by this treatment, a female interpreter that I had, who was a native of this country,* and whom I obtained at Putunchán on the Rio Grande, (as I have already mentioned in my former despatch,) was informed by another female, a native of this city, that a numerous force of Muteczuma lay very near the city, and that the inhabitants had carried out their wives and children and wearing apparel, as an attack was meditated that would destroy us all; and that if she wished to save herself, she should go with her, as she could protect her. My interpreter told this to Geronimo de Aguilar, another interpreter, whom I had obtained in Yucatán, of whom I also wrote to your Highness, and he gave me the information; when I took one of the natives of the city, and drew him aside privately so that no one saw me, and interrogated him on the subject; this man confirmed all that the Indian women and the natives of Tlascala had stated. Judging from this information, as well as the signs that I had observed, I determined to anticipate their movements, in order to prevent being taken by surprise; and I sent for the nobles of the city, to whom I said that I wished to speak with them, and shut them in a room by themselves. In the mean time, I caused our people to be put under arms, and ordered them, when a gun was fired as a signal, to attack a crowd of Indians that had collected near my quarters, many of whom had entered within it. After I had shut up the nobles, I left them well secured, and mounting a horse, I caused the signal gun to be fired, and we made such execution that in two hours more than three thousand of the enemy perished.

* Doña Marina, the most celebrated of Mexican women.

And that your Majesty may know how well prepared they were, before I sallied forth from our quarters they had occupied all the streets with their forces and posted men in readiness for the attack, although as we took them by surprise they were easily routed, especially as they were without their leaders, whom I had already made prisoners; and I set fire to several towers and strong houses, from which they defended themselves and attacked us. Thus I scoured the city, fighting my way and leaving my quarters well secured, being of great strength, for five hours, until I had driven all the people out of the city, from different points, in which I was assisted by five thousand Indians of Tascaltecal, and four hundred of Cempoal. On my return to our quarters, I addressed myself to the captive nobles, and demanded why they had wished to betray and destroy me? They answered, that it was not their fault, as the men of Culúa, [Mexico,] who were the vassals of Muteczuma, had urged them to it, and that Muteczuma was to have had within the distance of a league and a half from the city, as it afterwards appeared, a force of fifty thousand men for that purpose. But as they saw that he had deceived them, if I would allow one or two of their number to depart, they would collect the people of the city and cause the women and children to return with their effects; and they begged that I would pardon their mistake, declaring that henceforth they would never deceive me, but prove true and loyal vassals of your Highness, and my friends. After I had said a great deal to them in regard to their error I suffered two of them to go, and the next day the whole city was filled with men, women and children, in as much security as if nothing had occurred; and subsequently I set at liberty all the other chiefs upon

their promise to serve your Majesty in the most loyal manner. At the expiration of about fifteen or twenty days I left the city and country, so peaceful and populous that nothing seemed to be wanting to it, either in its markets or the domestic trade which it had enjoyed before. I also brought about a friendship between the people of Churultecal [Cholula] and of Tascaltecal, [Tlascala,] which had formerly existed until within a short period, when Muteczuma by presents had enticed the former into an alliance with him and rendered them enemies to one another. This city of Churultecal is situated on a plain and contains about twenty thousand houses within the body of the town, and as many more in the suburbs. It is an independent state, and has its boundaries well defined; not yielding obedience to any sovereign, but governed in the same way as Tascaltecal. The inhabitants are better clothed than the Tlascalans in some respects, as the superior classes of citizens all wear cloaks over their other dress; similar in shape, material, and bordering, to those of Africa, but unlike them in being provided with pockets. Since the late troubles they have been and continue true and obedient vassals of your Majesty, performing whatever is required of them in your royal name, and I believe they will remain so hereafter. This state is very fertile under cultivation, as there is much land, most of which is well watered; and the exterior of the city is more beautiful than any in Spain, as it contains many towers, and is situated upon a plain. And I assure your Majesty, that I have counted from a mosque or temple four hundred mosques and as many towers, all of which are of mosques in this city. This city is more suitable for the Spaniards to inhabit than any of the towns we have yet seen, as it has unoccupied

lands and water for cattle, which none of the others have that we have seen; and the multitude of people who dwell in the other places is so great, that there is not a hand's-breadth of land which is not cultivated; nevertheless, in many of these places they suffer from want of bread, and there are many poor people who ask alms of the rich in the streets, and at the houses and markets, as is done by the mendicants in Spain and other civilized countries.

CHAPTER IV.

I SPOKE to the envoys of Muteczuma who were with me concerning the treachery that had been practised in Cholula, and said I had been informed by the leaders that it was done through the advice of Muteczuma; but that it did not appear to me it could have been the act of so great a sovereign as he was, to send his messengers and noble persons to me, declaring that he was my friend, as he had done, and at the same time seeking means to attack me through others, in order that he might avoid censure in case the design did not succeed. But since it was so, and he did not keep his word, nor adhere to the truth, I told them I should change my own purpose; that until then it had been my intention to visit his country as a friend, to see and talk with him, and hold much peaceful intercourse with him; but that now I should enter his dominions in the guise of war, doing all the injury that was in my power, as an enemy; that I was sorry to adopt this course, as I preferred to have his friendship, and to take counsel of him in whatever I had to do in this land. The envoys replied, that they had now been with me a long time, and that they had known nothing of any such understanding with the Cholulans, more than had been declared in that city since its submission, and they could not believe that it had taken place by the advice or command of Muteczuma; and they entreated that before I renounced his friendship and made war upon him, I would inform myself of the truth, and suffer one of their number to go and confer with him,

as he could return very soon, the distance from this city to where Muteczuma resides being but twenty leagues. I told them that this would be agreeable to me, and I allowed one of them to go, who returned from thence in six days, accompanied by the other envoy who had gone previously. They brought me ten pieces of gold plate, fifteen hundred pieces of cotton cloth, a great number of fowls, and a beverage, in common use among them, which is called panicap;* and they informed me that Muteczuma had been much troubled on account of what had occurred at Churultecal, but that I must not believe it had been done by his advice or command, as he would prove to me with certainty that it was not so; that the troops in the garrison near the city were, indeed, his, but that they had moved without his orders, at the instigation of the Cholulans, since there were two of his provinces bordering upon Cholula, that had an alliance with that state on account of their proximity to it to aid one another; one of them was called Acancigo, and the other Izcucan, [Acazingo and Izucar,] and that in this way they had gone there, and not by his orders; that I should see by his actions whether what he had sent to communicate to me was true or not; but nevertheless, that he begged me not to trouble myself to visit his country, as it was a barren region, and the people were in a suffering condition; and that he would send to me, wherever I was, to ascertain my wants, which he would supply in the most bountiful manner. I answered that I could not dispense with visiting his dominions, as I was obliged to transmit an account of them, as well as of himself, to your Majesty; that I fully believed what he had stated, by his envoys;

* It may have been bread made of maize, as Herrera says, or a beverage called Atole, made of maize, water and sugar.—L.

nevertheless, since I should not relinquish my purpose of seeing him, that it would be better it should be done in a friendly manner, and that no obstacles be thrown in my way, as otherwise it would be attended with injury to himself, and I should much regret any such occurrence. As soon as he saw that it was my determined desire to visit him and his country, he sent to say that it was well; that he should expect me in the great city where he was, and that several of his people would join me, as soon as I had entered his territory. These persons desired me to take a certain route,* on which they might contrive to have an attack made upon me, as it afterwards appeared; since a number of Spaniards whom I afterwards sent through the country saw how it was; I should have found on that route so many bridges and difficult passes, that as I went through it they would have been able to execute their designs with safety to themselves. But as God has ever seen fit to guide your sacred Majesty from your infancy in the right way, and as I and those who accompanied me, were engaged in the royal service, another route was pointed out to us, somewhat rough,† indeed, but not so dangerous as the other, and this I took.

Eight leagues from the city of Cholula are two very lofty and remarkable mountains; in the latter part of August their summits are covered with snow; and from the highest, by night as well as by day, a volume of smoke arises, equal in bulk to a spacious house; it ascends above the mountain to the clouds as straight as an arrow, and with such force, that although a very strong wind is always blowing on the mountain, it does

* This route was through Calpulalpa.—L.

† That of Rio Frio, along the side of the Sierra Nevada.—L.

not turn the smoke from its course.* As I have desired to render your Highness a very minute account of every thing in this part of the world, I wished to ascertain the cause of this phenomenon, as it appeared to me, and I despatched ten of my companions, such as I thought suitable for this purpose, with several natives of the country for guides, charging them to use every endeavor to ascend the mountain and find out the cause of that smoke, whence and how it was produced. They went, and struggled with all their might to reach the summit, but were unable on account of the great quantity of snow that lay on the mountain, and the whirlwinds of ashes that swept over it, and also because they found the cold above insupportable; but they reached very near the summit, and while they were there, the smoke began to issue forth with so much force and noise that it seemed as if the whole Sierra was crumbling to the ground; so they descended, and brought with them a considerable quantity of snow and icicles, that we might see them, as it was something quite new in this region on account of its being in so warm a latitude, according to the opinion of our pilots, who place it in 20°, which is the same parallel as the Island of Española, where the heat is at all times extreme. While on their way to the mountain, the party discovered a road, and inquired of their Indian companions where it led, who told them to Culua, [Mexico,] and that it was a good road, while the other, which the Culuans wished us to take, was not a good one. The Spaniards followed this road until they began to ascend the mountain, between which and the other elevation it passed; and from it they discovered the plains of Culua, and the great city of Temix-

* The Indians call this volcano Popocatepetl, or the *Mountain that smokes.*

titan, [Mexico,] and the lakes in that province, of which I shall hereafter give your Highness an account; they returned overjoyed on having discovered so good a road, and God knows how much joy I felt on the occasion. Having obtained all the information I could from the Spaniards who had returned from their visit to the mountain, as well as from the natives, concerning the road they had discovered, I addressed myself to the envoys of Muteczuma, who accompanied me as guides to their country, and said to them, that I would take the new route instead of that which they had recommended, as it was shorter. They answered that I was right, that the new route was shorter and more level, and that the reason they had not pointed it out to me was, that we should have to pass one day through the territory of Guasucingo, [Guajozingo,] whose inhabitants were their enemies, and would not furnish supplies, as was done in the territory of Muteczuma; but that since I preferred that route, they would cause provisions to be sent in that direction. And thus we set forth, not without some apprehension that they would persist in their endeavors to entrap us; but as we had already declared what route it was our intention to take, it did not seem to me worth while to change our plan, or to return on our steps, lest they should imagine that our courage failed us. On the day that I left the city of Cholula, I advanced four leagues to some villages in the state of Guasucingo, where we were well received by the natives, who gave me a number of female slaves, some cotton cloth, and several small pieces of gold, amounting altogether to very little, as the people are not well supplied with it, on account of their belonging to the league and party of the Tlas-

calans, and being so closely hemmed in on all sides by the territory of Muteczuma, that they could have no trade with any other province but their own; whence they lived very poorly. The next day I entered the pass between the two mountains already mentioned, and in descending it we discovered the province of Chalco, in the territory of Muteczuma, two leagues from us, and when we had reached the inhabited parts, we found a newly constructed building for our quarters, and so large that all my men and myself were comfortably lodged in it, although I had with me more than four thousand Indians, natives of the provinces of Tascaltecal, Guasucingo, Churultecal, and Cempoal, for all of whom there was an abundant supply of provisions; and there were large fires in all the lodging-rooms, with a plenty of wood, as it was very cold on account of the proximity of the two mountains*, which were covered with snow.

There came to me at this place several persons, apparently of some rank, among whom was one that I was told was a brother of Muteczuma. They brought me gold to the value of 3,000 *pesos*, and said on behalf of that sovereign, that he had sent me this present, and at the same time requested that I would retrace my steps, and not think of visiting his city, as the country was ill supplied with provisions, and the road that led to it was bad; and that the city was all on the water, so that I could not enter it except in canoes, and with many other inconveniences that would obstruct my course. They added, that I might have all that I asked, which Muteczuma, their sovereign, had commanded them to give me; and that they would agree to pay me every year a

* Popecatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, or Sierra Nevada.

certain sum (*certum quid*), which they would carry to the sea, or wherever I wished. I received them kindly, and spoke to them of our Spain, of which they had heard much, addressing myself especially to the one who was said to be a brother of Muteczuma. In answer to their official communication, I said,—that if it was in my power to return, I would do so to oblige Muteczuma; but that I had come into this country by the command of your Majesty, and that I was particularly charged to render an account of Muteczuma and his great city, of the fame of which your Highness had long since heard—that they might assure him from me, that I was extremely desirous he should take my visit to him in good part, since it would be productive of no injury, but rather of advantage to his person and country; that after I had seen him, if it was still his wish not to have my company, I would then return ; and that we should be better able to agree in person, as to the homage he should render to your Highness, than through the agency of others, however trustworthy they might be. With this answer they returned. Judging from the appearance of our quarters, and the arrangements made respecting them, it struck me that the Indians intended to attack us that night; but on perceiving this, I took such precautions as, coming to their knowledge, changed their determination; and they drew off that night very secretly a large force, which they had placed in the mountains adjacent to our camp, as was observed by many of our scouts and sentinels.

As soon as it was day I set out for a town two leagues distant, called Amaqueruca,* in the province of Chalco,

* Now Amecameca.

which contains a population, including the villages within two leagues of it, of more than twenty thousand inhabitants. In this place they quartered us in the excellent houses of the governor. Many persons, apparently of a superior rank, here waited upon me, and announced that Muteczuma, their sovereign lord, had sent them to receive me at this place, with orders to provide every thing necessary to supply our wants. The governor of this province and town presented me with forty slaves* and 3000 castellanos, and during the two days that I was there supplied us with an abundance of provisions. The next day—accompanied by the envoys of Muteczuma who received us here—I departed and reached for the night a small place four leagues distant, situated partly upon a great lake, and partly upon a rough, rocky mountain, where we were well lodged. Here likewise they would have tried our strength, but that they desired to do so without danger to themselves, as it seemed, by attacking us in the night, when they expected to take us by surprise. But as I was well informed of their intentions, they found that I had anticipated their designs. That night I placed a strong guard, who took and killed fifteen or twenty spies that came in canoes on the lake, or descended the mountain to see whether I was prepared to resist an attack. Thus few of them returned to give the information they were sent to obtain; and finding us always upon our guard, they concluded to change their plans, and to suffer us to proceed in safety. The next morning when I was about leaving that place, there arrived ten or twelve of the most distinguished personages, as I afterwards learned, and among them a

* Slavery had been already introduced among the Mexicans, and the sons of those whom they had taken in war were reduced to a sort of servitude.—L.

young man of about twenty-five years of age, to whom all showed particular marks of respect; and after he had alighted from a litter in which he came, the others began to remove stones out of his path, and to clear up the ground before him.* As soon as they arrived they announced that they had come on the part of Muteczuma, their liege lord, who had sent them to accompany me, and begged that I would pardon him for not coming himself to receive me, which he was unable to do on account of indisposition; but that the city was now near at hand, and as I was still determined to visit it, he would receive us there, when I should learn his willingness to do homage to your Highness. But, nevertheless, he entreated that if it was possible, I would not go to the city, for I should meet with much trouble and want, and he would be ashamed not to be able to provide for me there in the manner he wished. The envoys also earnestly insisted on the same thing, and were extremely importunate; at the same time assuring me that they would protect us on the route if I persisted in proceeding. I made them a courteous reply, and calmed their anxiety by the mildest language in my power, giving them to understand that my visit would not be attended with injury, but advantage to Muteczuma. And thus they took their leave, after I had made them presents of some things that I had brought with me. I soon followed them, being accompanied by many persons who appeared to be of great consideration, as I afterwards learned was the case. As I was pursuing the road that led along the shore of the great lake, at the distance of a league from the place of our departure, I discovered upon the surface

* At the present day the Indians preserve the custom of removing stones from the road when preceding any person of elevated rank, as I have noticed when going into the country attended by them.—L.

of the water a small town, that might contain from one to two thousand inhabitants, well fortified and defended with towers, as it appeared on the outside, but without any entrance.* A league farther on we came to a causeway of the width of a spear's length, running two thirds of a league into the lake, which led to a city that, although small, was the most beautiful we had yet seen, composed of well-constructed houses and towers, having the foundations laid with great regularity and wholly in the water. In this city, which contains about two thousand inhabitants, we were well received, and entertained with a handsome repast. The chief magistrate and other persons of rank came to see me, and requested that I would pass the night there. But some of Muteczuma's people who were with me advised me not to stop, but to go on to another city, three leagues distant, called Iztapalapa, belonging to a brother of Muteczuma, and I accordingly did so. The road from the city where we had our repast, the name of which does not now occur to me, was by another causeway, which is a full league in length to terra firma. Having arrived at the city of Iztapalapa, the cacique came to receive me at some distance from the town, together with another dignitary of a great city about three leagues off, called Calnaacan, [Culhuacán] accompanied by many other distinguished personages, who were expecting my arrival there, and presented me with 3 or 4000 castellanos, some slaves, and cotton cloth, giving me altogether a very agreeable reception.

The city of Iztapalapa contains twelve or fifteen thou-

* The cities of which mention is here made, are, first, Iztapaluca, which is next beyond Chalco on the road to Mexico; then Thlahuac, Misquic, and Culhuacán, all of which are situated on the water.—L.

sand houses; it is situated on the shore of a large salt lake, one-half of it being built upon the water, and one-half on terra firma.* The governor or chief of the city has several new houses, which, although they are not yet finished, are equal to the better class of houses in Spain —being large and well constructed, in the stone work, the carpentry, the floors, and the various appendages necessary to render a house complete, excepting the reliefs and other rich work usual in Spanish houses. There are also many upper and lower rooms—cool gardens, abounding in trees and odoriferous flowers; also pools of fresh water, well constructed, with stairs leading to the bottom. There is also a very extensive kitchen garden attached to the house, and over it a belvidere with beautiful corridors and halls; and within the garden a large square pond of fresh water,† having its walls formed of handsome hewn stone; and adjacent to it there is a promenade, consisting of a tiled pavement so broad that four persons can walk on it abreast, and four hundred paces square, or sixteen hundred paces round; enclosed on one side towards the wall of the garden by canes, intermingled with *vergas*, and on the other side by shrubs and sweet-scented plants. The pond contains a great variety of fish and water-fowl, as wild ducks,‡ teal,

* Iztapalapa preserves to this day the same name, and many remains of the houses here described by Cortes; since in taking earth from the middle for bricks, several high platforms are seen on which buildings were erected to protect the inhabitants in case of an inundation.—L.

† The site of this pond [*alberca*] is, at the present day, covered by the lake Tezcuco, but there are still seen the remains and fragments of the edifice described above.—L.

‡ Innumerable ducks and geese are at the present day killed on the lake in various ways; one mode is with a large handgun, called by the Indians, *Esmeril*; another is, for the Indians to cover their heads with a hollow pumpkin, and concealing the body beneath the water, they seize the ducks with the hand; another is, by taking them in nets during the night.—L.

and others so numerous that they often cover the surface of the water. The next day after my arrival at this city I departed on my route, and having proceeded half a league, I entered upon a causeway that extends two leagues through the centre of the salt lake, until it reaches the great city of Temixtitan, [Mexico,] which is built in the middle of the lake. This causeway is as broad as two spears' length, and well constructed, so that eight horsemen can ride on it abreast; and within two leagues, on either side of this causeway, there are three cities, one of which, called Mesicalsingo, is built for the most part on the lake, and the two others, called Nyciaca and Huchilohuchico, are situated along its borders, with many houses on the water. The former of these cities contains about three thousand families, the second more than six thousand, and the third four or five thousand; in all of them are well built houses and towers, especially the residences of the governors and principal men, and the mosques or temples, in which they have their idols. In these cities there is a considerable trade in salt, which is manufactured from the water of the lake, and from a deposit on the grounds washed by the lake, which they boil in some way, and make into loaves, selling it to the natives and persons out of the district or province.

I pursued my course over the abovementioned causeway, and having proceeded half a league before arriving at the body of the city of Temixtitan, I found at its intersection with another causeway, which extends from this point to terra firma, a very strong fortress with two towers, surrounded by a double wall, twelve feet in height, with an embattled parapet, which commands the two causeways, and has only two gates, one for

entering, and the other for departure. There came to meet me at this place nearly a thousand of the principal inhabitants of the great city, all uniformly dressed according to their custom in very rich costumes; and as soon as they had come within speaking distance, each one, as he approached me, performed a salutation in much use among them, by placing his hand upon the ground and kissing it; and thus I was kept waiting about an hour, until all had performed the ceremony. Connected with the city is a wooden bridge ten paces wide, where the causeway is open to allow the water free ingress and egress, as it rises and falls; and also for the security of the city, as they can remove the long and wide beams of which the bridge is formed, and replace them whenever they wish; and there are many such bridges in different parts of the city, as your Highness will perceive hereafter from the particular account I shall give of it.

When we had passed the bridge, the Señor Muteczuma came out to receive us, attended by about two hundred nobles, all barefooted and dressed in livery, or a peculiar garb of fine cotton, richer than is usually worn; they came in two processions in close proximity to the houses on each side of the street,* which is very wide and beautiful, and so straight that you can see from one end of it to the other, although it is two thirds of a league in length, having on both sides large and elegant houses and temples. Muteczuma came through the centre of the street, attended by two lords, one upon his right, and the other upon his left hand, one of whom

* The streets are so different at the present time, that we are unable to form a clear idea of what they then were, but this street seems to be the same that now crosses the city from the Hospital of St. Antonio.—L.

was the same nobleman who, as I have mentioned, came to meet me in a litter; and the other was the brother of Muteczuma, lord of the city of Iztapalapa, which I had left the same day; all three were dressed in the same manner, except that Muteczuma wore shoes, while the others were without them. He was supported on the arms of both, and as we approached, I alighted and advanced alone to salute him; but the two attendant lords stopped me to prevent my touching him, and they and he both performed the ceremony of kissing the ground; after which he directed his brother who accompanied him to remain with me; the latter accordingly took me by the arm, while Muteczuma, with his other attendant, walked a short distance in front of me, and after he had spoken to me, all the other nobles also came up to address me, and then went away in two processions with great regularity, one after the other, and in this manner returned to the city. At the time I advanced to speak to Muteczuma, I took off from myself a collar of pearls and glass diamonds,* and put it around his neck. After having proceeded along the street, one of his servants came bringing two collars formed of shell fish, enclosed in a roll of cloth, which were made from the shells of colored prawns or periwinkles, held by them in high estimation; and from each collar depended eight golden prawns, finished in a very perfect manner, about a foot and a half in length.† When these were brought, Muteczuma turned towards me and put them round my neck; he then returned along the street in the

* Pearls and glass crystals, of great estimation with the Indians, who had never seen glass or crystal.—L.

† They are still called prawns (camazones,) corresponding in some degree to strings of coral.—L.

order already described, until he reached a very large and splendid palace, in which we were to be quartered, which had been fully prepared for our reception. He there took me by the hand and led me into a spacious saloon, in front of which was a court, through which we entered. Having caused me to sit down on a piece of rich carpeting, which he had ordered to be made for his own use, he told me to wait his return there,* and then went away. After a short space of time, when my people were all bestowed in their quarters, he returned with many and various jewels of gold and silver, feather-work, and five or six thousand pieces of cotton cloth, very rich and of varied texture and finish. After having presented these to me, he sat down on another piece of carpet they had placed for him near me, and being seated he discoursed as follows:—

"It is now a long time since, by means of written records, we learned from our ancestors that neither myself nor any of those who inhabit this region were descended from its original inhabitants, but from strangers who emigrated hither from a very distant land; and we have also learned that a prince, whose vassals they all were, conducted our people into these parts, and then returned to his native land. He afterwards came again to this country, after the lapse of much time, and found that his people had intermarried with the native inhabitants, by whom they had many children, and had built towns in which they resided; and when he desired them to return with him, they were unwilling to go, nor were they disposed to acknowledge him as their sovereign; so he departed from the country, and we have always heard that his descendants would come to conquer this

* They sat like Asiatics on the floor, in a recumbent posture, or on a carpet.—L.

land, and reduce us to subjection as his vassals; and according to the direction from which you say you have come, namely, the quarter where the sun rises, and from what you say of the great lord or king who sent you hither, we believe and are assured that he is our natural sovereign, especially as you say that it is a long time since you first had knowledge of us. Therefore be assured that we will obey you, and acknowledge you for our sovereign in place of the great lord whom you mention, and that there shall be no default or deception on our part. And you have the power in all this land, I mean wherever my power extends, to command what is your pleasure, and it shall be done in obedience thereto, and all that we have is at your disposal. And since you are in your own proper land and your own house, rest and refresh yourselves after the toils of your journey, and the conflicts in which you have been engaged, which have been brought upon you, as I well know, by all the people from Puntunchan* to this place; and I am aware that the Cempoallans and Tlascalans have told you much evil of me, but believe no more than you see with your own eyes, especially from those who are my enemies, some of whom were once my subjects, and having rebelled upon your arrival, make these statements to ingratiate themselves in your favor. These people, I know, have informed you that I possessed houses with walls of gold, and that my carpets and other things in common use were of the texture of gold; and that I was a god, or made myself one, and many other such things. The houses you see are of stone and lime and earth." And then he opened his robes and showed

* Province of Potinchán, or Potonchán, in Tabasco, now called Pueblo la Victoria.—L.

his person to me, saying, "You see that I am composed of flesh and bone like yourselves, and that I am mortal, and palpable to the touch," at the same time pinching his arms and body with his hands; "see," he continued, "how they have deceived you. It is true I have some things of gold, which my ancestors have left me; all that I have is at your service whenever you wish it. I am now going to my other houses where I reside; you will be here provided with every thing necessary for yourself and your people, and will suffer no embarrassment, as you are in your own house and country." I answered him in respect to all that he had said, expressing my acknowledgments, and adding whatever the occasion seemed to demand, especially endeavoring to confirm him in the belief that your Majesty was the sovereign they had looked for; and after this he took his leave, and having gone, we were liberally supplied with fowls, bread, fruits, and other things required for the use of our quarters. In this way I was for six days amply provided with all that was necessary, and visited by many of the nobility.

I mentioned, most Catholic Sire, at the commencement of this letter, that at the time I departed from the city of Vera Cruz in quest of this Señor Muteczuma, I left there one hundred and fifty men to erect a fort, which had been already begun; and I also stated that I had left many towns and fortified places in the neighborhood of that city in subjection to the royal dominion of your Highness, and the inhabitants secure and decided in their allegiance to your Majesty. While I was in the city of Churultecal, [Cholula,] I received letters from the commander, whom I had stationed in my place at Vera Cruz, informing me that Qualpopoca, lord of the

city of Almeria,* had sent messengers to announce that he desired to become a subject of your Highness, and if he had not appeared before, and still did not appear, to render that homage which it was his duty to yield, and to offer himself with all his territories as a vassal to your Majesty, the reason was, that he would be compelled to pass through his enemies' country, which he had not done in consequence of his apprehension of an attack from them; but that if I would despatch to him four Spaniards, they might accompany him, and the people through whose lands they would have to pass, knowing for what purpose they came, would not molest them; and thus he would be able to come to us at once. The captain, believing that Qualpopoca was sincere in what he said, as many others had done the same thing, sent four Spaniards to him; but when he had got them into his power, he ordered them to be put to death, in such a way that it might not appear to have been done through his means; and thus two of them were killed, while the others effected their escape across the mountains, though wounded. Thereupon the captain marched against the city of Almeria with fifty Spaniards, two horsemen, and two pieces of fire-arms, and a force of from eight to ten thousand friendly Indians, with which he fought the inhabitants of that city and killed many of them, driving the rest away, and burning and destroying the city. The Indians who had accompanied him, being enemies to the Almerians, aided in the attack with great spirit and vigor. Qualpopoca himself, together with the other caciques, his allies, who had come to his assistance, escaped by flight, and some prisoners who were taken in the city gave in-

* So called by Cortes, but by the Mexicans, Nauthla.—L.

formation as to the people engaged in its defence, and the cause of their killing the Spaniards that had been sent to them. They said that Muteczuma had ordered Qualpopoca and the others who had come there as his vassals, (for such they were,) that when I left the city of Vera Cruz, they should fall upon those who had rebelled and entered the service of your Highness; and that they should devise every means of destroying the Spaniards I had left there, so that they might not aid or favor us; and that accordingly, in consequence of these orders, they had done so.

Six days having passed, most powerful Prince, since I entered the great city of Temixtitan, and having seen some things in it, though but a few compared with what there was to be seen and noted, it seemed to me, judging from these things, and from what I had observed of the country, that it would subserve the interests of your Majesty and our own security if Muteczuma was in my power, and not wholly free from restraint; in order that he might not be diverted from the resolution and willing spirit which he showed in the service of your Majesty, especially as we Spaniards were somewhat troublesome and difficult to please; lest feeling annoyed on any occasion, he should do us some serious injury, and even might cause all memory of us to perish, in the exercise of his great power. It also appeared to me that if he was under my control, all the other countries that were subject to him would be more easily brought to the knowledge and service of your Majesty, as afterwards actually happened. I resolved, therefore, to take him and place him in my quarters, which were of great strength; and revolving in my mind how this could be effected without occasioning any tumult or disturb-

ance, I recollected what the officer whom I had left in command at Vera Cruz, had written me concerning the occurrences in the city of Almeria, which I have already related, and which, as he was informed, had all taken place in pursuance of orders from Muteczuma. Having used the precaution to station guards at the corners of the streets, I went to the palace of Muteczuma, as I had before often done to visit him; and after conversing with him in a sportive manner on agreeable topics, and receiving at his hands some jewels of gold, and one of his own daughters, together with several daughters of his nobles for some of my company, I then said to him, "that I had been informed of what had taken place in the city of Nautecal or Almeria, and of the fate of the Spaniards, who had been killed there; that Qualpopoca alleged in defence of his conduct, that whatever he had done was in pursuance of orders from him, which, as his vassal, he could not disregard; that I did not believe it was so, but nevertheless, in order to clear himself from the imputation, it seemed to me proper that he should send for Qualpopoca and the other principal men of that city, who had been concerned in the slaughter of the Spaniards, that the truth of the matter might be known, and those men punished, by which means he would satisfy your Majesty of his loyal disposition beyond all dispute; lest instead of the rewards which your Majesty would order to be given him, the reports of these outrages might provoke your Majesty's anger against him, on account of his having commanded the injury to be done; since I was well satisfied that the truth was contrary to what those men had declared."

Immediately Muteczuma ordered certain of his followers to be called, to whom he gave a small stone resem-

bling a seal, which he wore upon his arm, and ordered them to go to the city of Almeria, which is sixty or seventy leagues from Mextitán, [Mexico,] and conduct Qualpopoca hither; and having ascertained what others were concerned in the murder of the Spaniards, to have them come likewise; that if they refused to come voluntarily, they should be brought as prisoners; and if they resisted, they should call upon the communities adjacent to that city, which he indicated to them, for an armed force to assist in taking the offenders; and that they should by no means return without them. These persons departed at once, and when they had gone, I said to Muteczuma, that I was pleased with his diligence in this matter, since I should have to render an account to your Majesty of the Spaniards who had been killed. As for what remained of my duty in the premises, I must have him in my quarters until the truth was more clearly ascertained, and himself shown to be free from blame; and I begged him to suffer no uneasiness on this account, as he would not be treated as a prisoner, but left in the full possession of his liberty; that no obstacle should be interposed to his enjoying the service of his followers, who would continue to be at his command; that he might select an apartment, such as would please him, in the palace I occupied, where he would be at his ease; that he might rest assured that nothing should be allowed to give him pain or inconvenience; and that in addition to his own servants, my companions would cheerfully obey all his commands. Much conversation and discourse followed in regard to this arrangement, too long to be described at length, and even to be repeated to your Majesty, being not only prolix, but scarcely material to the case; and, therefore, I shall say no more

than that, finally, he expressed his willingness to go with me. He immediately gave orders to have the apartment he wished to occupy put in order for his use, which was well situated and handsomely fitted up; and this being done, many nobles came to him, stripped of their robes, which they carried hanging upon their arms, and bare-footed, bringing a litter, not in the best order, on which, with tears in their eyes, they placed him in deep silence; and in this manner we proceeded to the quarters which I occupied, without exciting any commotion in the city, although some signs of a disturbance began to appear. But as soon as Muteczuma heard of it, he sent orders forbidding any movement; and thus all remained quiet as before, and continued so during the whole time that Muteczuma was my prisoner, since he was entirely at his ease, with the same attendance that he had been accustomed to in his own palace, which was very large and splendid, as I shall hereafter relate; and I and my companions did every thing in our power to gratify his wishes.

Fifteen or twenty days after his imprisonment, the messengers arrived that Muteczuma had sent in quest of Qualpopoca and the others concerned in the murder of the Spaniards; and they brought with them that chief and his sons, together with fifteen persons who were said to be men of rank, and implicated in the affair. Qualpopoca was brought on a litter, much in the style of a governor, as in fact he was. They were delivered into my hands, and I caused them to be placed under a strong guard; and when they acknowledged that they had killed the Spaniards, I directed them to be asked if they were the vassals of Muteczuma? Qualpopoca replied—"If I have any other sovereign, who is it?" as

much as to say that he had no other, and that they were his vassals. I also inquired if what had been done by them was by his command? They answered, no; although afterwards, when the sentence of death by burning was about to be executed upon them, they all with one voice declared that Muteczuma had sent to command it to be done, and that they had acted in pursuance of his orders. So they were publicly burned in a square of the city, without creating any disturbance; and on the day of their execution, as they confessed that Muteczuma had directed them to kill the Spaniards, I caused him to be put in irons, which threw him into great consternation. On the same day, however, after having spoken to him, I caused his irons to be removed, and left him quite satisfied; and from that time I exerted myself to gratify his wishes, and render him contented by all means in my power. I publicly announced and declared to all the natives of the country, as well to the governors as to the people who came to me, that your Majesty's service would be promoted by Muteczuma's remaining at the head of his government, only acknowledging your Majesty's superiority, and that your Majesty would be pleased by their obeying and respecting Muteczuma as their sovereign, as they had done before my arrival in the country. Such was the kindness of my treatment towards him, and his own contentment with his situation, that when at different times I tempted him with the offer of his liberty, begging that he would return to his palace, he as often replied that he was well pleased with his present quarters, and did not wish to leave them, as he wanted nothing that he was accustomed to enjoy in his own palace; and that in case he went away, there would be reason to fear the

importunities of the local governors, his vassals, might lead him to act against his own wishes, and in opposition to your Majesty, while he desired in every possible manner to promote your Majesty's service; that so far he had informed them what he desired to have done, and was well content to remain where he was; and should they wish to suggest any thing to him, he could answer that he was not at liberty, and thus excuse himself from attending to them. Several times he asked permission to visit his pleasure-houses for the purpose of recreation, both within the city and without, and in no instance was his request denied. He often made an excursion, attended by five or six Spaniards, one or two leagues out of the city, and always returned in fine spirits to his quarters where I had placed him; and whenever he went out, he made many presents of jewels and cotton cloth, both to the Spaniards by whom he was accompanied, and to his own people, who followed him in such numbers that there were never less than three thousand men in his retinue, most of whom were nobles and persons of distinction; and he always gave many banquets and entertainments to those who accompanied him, which they considered worth relating.

When I discovered that Muteczuma was fully devoted to the service of your Highness, I requested him that, in order to enable me to render a complete account to your Majesty of the productions of the country, he would point out to me the mines from which gold was obtained; to which he consented with the greatest readiness, saying that it would give him pleasure to do so. He immediately sent for several of his public servants, and assigned them to four provinces, two to each province, in which he said the gold was obtained; and he asked

me to allow some of the Spaniards to go with them, that they might observe the manner in which gold was procured; and I accordingly deputed two Spaniards for the same number of his own men. One party of them went to a province called Cuzula, eighty leagues from the great city of Temixtitan, whose inhabitants are vassals of Muteczuma, where they were shown three rivers, from all of which they brought me specimens of gold, of a good quality, although procured with little trouble, and without any other instruments than those used by the Indians. On their route they passed through three provinces, that, according to the report of the Spaniards, contained very fine land, many villages and cities, with much scattered population, and buildings equal to any in Spain. They mentioned particularly a house and castle, the latter larger, of greater strength, and better built than the castle of Burgos; and the people of one of these provinces, called Tamazulapa,* were better clothed than those of any other we had seen, as it justly appeared to them. Another party of our envoys went to a province called Malinaltebeque, [in Oaxaca,] which is also seventy leagues from the great city, but more towards the seacoast. They brought me specimens of gold from a great river that passes through it. The other party visited a region beyond this river, inhabited by a people speaking a different language from those of Culua, and called Tenis; whose chief ruler is named Coatelicamar.† His territory is situated on a lofty and rough mountainous range, with a population inured to war, who fight with spears of twenty-five to thirty palms length; he is independent of Muteczuma. The

* In Oaxaca.

† This was the Lord of T'enich, which is the river above Maninaltepec.—L.

messengers with the Spaniards did not dare enter this province, as it was not subject to Muteczuma, without first notifying the governor, and asking his permission, announcing that they had come with certain Spaniards to see the gold mines that were in his country, for whom they requested a favorable reception in my name and that of Muteczuma, their lord. Coatelicamar answered, that he was very willing the Spaniards should enter his province and see the mines, with any thing else they pleased; but that the Culuans, who were subjects of Muteczuma, must not do so, as they were his enemies. The Spaniards were somewhat at a loss whether to go alone or not; their companions advised them not to go, as they would be put to death, alleging that it was for the purpose of being able to destroy them, that he would not consent to the Culuans accompanying them. At length, however, they resolved to go alone, and were well received by the governor and his people, who showed them seven or eight mines from which they said gold was procured; and in their presence some of the Indians got out a quantity of the precious metal, of which specimens were brought to me. Coatelicamar sent by these Spaniards several messengers, offering himself and his land to the service of your Majesty, and accompanying his professions with presents of gold and cotton cloth. The other party of envoys visited a province called Tuchitebeque, on the same route, towards the sea, twelve leagues from the province of Malinaltebeque, where I have already said gold was found, and there they were shown two other streams, from which also they obtained specimens of gold.

The Spaniards who went to the Province of Malinaltebeque, informed me that it contained every convenience

for establishing farming stations, and procuring gold; on this account I requested Muteczuma to establish a plantation there for your Majesty. He accordingly set to work for this purpose with so much diligence, that within two months from the time I spoke to him on the subject, sixty fanegas of maize, and ten of beans were planted, together with two thousand cacoa trees,* which bear a fruit resembling the almond, that is sold after being ground, and is held in such estimation, that it is used as money throughout all the country, and employed in purchases in the markets and every where else.† He had also erected four very good houses, in one of which beside the apartments there was a pool of water, in which they placed five hundred geese, there held in high estimation, as they make a profitable use of their feathers, which they strip off every year and weave into thin cloth. They also placed there fifteen hundred domestic fowls; and altogether the improvements were valued by Spaniards who saw them at different times, exclusively of the soil, at 20,000 pesos of gold. I likewise inquired of Muteczuma if there were on the coast of the sea any river or bay into which ships could enter, and lie with safety. He answered that he did not know, but that he would cause a chart of the coast to be painted, showing the rivers and bays, and that I might send Spaniards to examine them, for which purpose he would despatch suitable persons with them as guides; and he did so. The next day they brought me a chart of the whole coast, painted on cloth; on which appeared a river that

* This is the Cacao, of which chocolate is made.—L.

† Even at the present day it is common in shops to give cacoa seeds in place of copper money, when the amount is less than a silver coin of the value of half a real, or six cents.—L.

discharged into the sea, with a wider mouth, according to the chart, than any others; this seemed to be between the mountains called Sanmyn, which extend to a bay until then believed by the pilots to separate the land at a province called Mazamalco.* Muteczuma told me that I might select whom I would wish to send, and that he would provide the means for their examining and ascertaining every thing; I immediately designated ten men, and among them several pilots and persons acquainted with the sea. Being furnished with the provision he made for them, they departed, and proceeded along the coast from the port of Chalchilmeca, called San Juan, where I first landed,† for sixty leagues and upwards, without finding any river or bay where ships could enter; although there were many large ones on the coast, which they sounded in canoes; and in this manner they arrived at the province of Quacalco abovementioned, [Mazamalco,] where was the river represented on the chart. The governor of this province, named Tuchintecla, received them well, and furnished them with canoes to explore the river. They found two fathoms and a half of water at its entrance, in the shallowest part, and ascending twelve leagues, the least depth they found was five or six fathoms; judging from their observations, it was thought that the river continued for thirty leagues of the same depth. There were numerous and large towns on its banks, and the whole province was level, and well fortified, rich in all the productions of the earth, and containing a numerous population, who are not vassals or subjects of Muteczuma, but rather his enemies.

* Now written Guazacualco, or Huasasalco, south of Vera Cruz. This passage is quoted by Humbolt, Nouv. Esp. l. v., c. xii.

† The present Vera Cruz.

The governor of the country, when the Spaniards arrived there, ordered that the Mexicans should not enter his territory, because they were his enemies; and when our people returned to me with this account, he sent several persons in their company, by whom he transmitted to me jewels of gold, skins of tigers, feathers, precious stones, and cotton cloth; and they informed me from him, that Tuchintela, their sovereign, had heard of me a long time ago, for the people of Putunchán, or the river of Grijalva,* who were his friends, had told him of my passing through their country, and making war upon them, because they opposed my entrance into their town; and how afterwards we left them as friends and vassals of your Majesty. He also offered himself and his whole province to the service of your Majesty, and begged me to receive him as a friend, on condition that the Mexicans should not enter his country, giving me liberty to examine all it contained, and of choosing whatever I pleased for your Majesty's use, of which he would yield an annual tribute.

When I was informed by the Spaniards that the province they had visited, was in a situation to be colonized, and that they had discovered a harbor in it, I was much gratified; since from the time that I had first set foot in this country, I had constantly sought to find some harbor upon its coast, where I might found a settlement, but I had not been able to discover one, nor is there any on all the coast, from the river San Antonio, which is next the Grijalva, to that of Panuco, which is down the coast, where certain Spaniards under Francisco de Garay, went for the purpose of establishing a colony, as I shall

* This river still preserves its name, but takes that of Tobasco at its mouth.—L.

hereafter relate to your Majesty.* In order to satisfy myself in relation to the province, the harbor, and the good will of the natives, I resolved to send thither certain of my company, who would be able to judge of the country from their observation and experience. They went in company with the messengers that the Lord Tuchintecla had sent to me, carrying several things that I sent to him as presents. Having arrived there, they were well received by him, and applied themselves to survey and sound the port and river, and to examine the sites the place afforded for a town. They afterwards brought me a full and correct report of their observations, and declared that every thing requisite for a settlement was to be found there. The governor himself was gratified, and expressed a great desire to become a vassal of your Majesty. As soon as they had returned, I despatched a captain with one hundred and fifty men for the purpose of tracing, planning and settling the town, and erecting a fortress, as the governor had consented to it, and offered whatever was necessary, or they might require for the purpose; and he even built six houses on the spot selected for the town, and said that he was very well pleased that we should go there to found a colony, and dwell upon his land.

I have, in the preceding pages, most powerful Sire, stated that at the time I entered the great city of Temixtitan, a great lord had met me on my route who came on behalf of Muteczuma; and according to what I afterwards learned, he was a near relative of that monarch, possessing a province next to that of Muteczuma, and

* The commercial town of Tampico is now situated at the mouth of the river Panuco.

called Haculuacán.* The capital of it was a very large city, adjacent to the salt lake; it is six leagues distant from the city of Temixtitan, as the canoes go by the lake, and ten leagues by land. The name of the city was Tezcuco, and it contained about thirty thousand families. There are in it, Sire, splendid houses, mosques, or temples, and oratories of great magnitude, and well finished. The markets are also very extensive; and besides this city, there are two others, one three leagues from Tezcuco, called Acuruman,† and the other six leagues, called Otumpa. Each of these contains three or four thousand families. This province and seignory of Haculuacán has numerous other villages and hamlets, and excellent lands, well cultivated. It borders on one side upon that of Tascaltecal, of which I have already spoken to your Majesty. The governor, who is named Cacamazin, after the imprisonment of Muteczuma, rebelled, both against your Majesty, to whom he professed allegiance, and against Muteczuma. Although he was several times summoned to come and render obedience to your Majesty's commands, he never would. Beside the requisitions I made of him, Muteczuma also sent his commands to him, to which he answered, that if they wanted any thing of him they should go to his country, where they should see what he was, and what service he was obliged to perform. I was told that he had a large force of armed men in readiness at a moment's warning. As neither by demonstrations nor requisitions was I able to induce him to yield, I spoke to Muteczuma, and asked his advice what it was best for us to do, in order that we might not leave his rebellion unpunished. He answered,

* The province of Culhuacán. † Now Oculma.

that should we resolve on war, it would be attended with much danger, as he was a great lord, and possessed much strength and many people; and he could not be attacked without the risk of great destruction of life. But that there were several of the principal persons of Cacamazin who resided in Mexico at his charge, and that he would speak to them on the subject, in order to induce some of Cacamazin's followers to come to Mexico, and thus being secured, they might favor our attempt, and their master be taken without risk. And so it turned out; Muteczuma laid his plans in such a manner, that a number of his leading men persuaded Cacamazin to meet them in the city of Tezcuco, for the purpose of taking measures in relation to the affairs of the state, (in which their station entitled them to a voice,) and who were grieved by the course he was pursuing, which would involve the ruin of the country. Accordingly they assembled in a splendid palace of Cacamazin, situated near the shore of the lake, which was built in such a manner that canoes could pass under it, and from thence issue forth upon the lake. At that place a number of boats were stationed, properly manned and equipped, in case Cacamazin should offer any resistance when taken. While he was consulting with his chiefs, they seized him, and before it was discovered by his attendants, they secured him in a boat, and launched out upon the lake, directing their course to the great city, which, as I have already stated, was six leagues distant. Having arrived there, they placed him on a litter, as his condition required, and they had been accustomed to do, and brought him to me; I immediately caused him to be put in irons, and to be carefully guarded. Having advised with Muteczuma, I conferred the government of the province on

his son, called Cucuzcasin, in the name of your Majesty; and I directed all the communities and lords of the province to obey him as their ruler, until your Majesty should order otherwise. Accordingly, from that time he was recognized and obeyed as their sovereign, in the same manner as Cacamazin had been; and he also obeyed all the commands that I imposed on him in your Majesty's name.

A few days after the imprisonment of Cacamazin, Muteczuma called together all the governors of the neighboring cities and states, and when they were assembled, he sent an invitation to me to join them; on my arrival, he addressed them as follows; "My brethren and friends, you know that for a long period you, your fathers, and ancestors have been the subjects and vassals of my predecessors and myself, and that both by them and me you have been always well treated and honored. You have also done all that is due from good and loyal vassals to their liege lords; and I also believe that you have heard from your ancestors, that they were not natives of this land, but that they came to it from a great distance, under the conduct of a sovereign whose subjects they all were; he left them here, but after a considerable time he returned, and found that our ancestors had become numerous and well established in this country, having intermarried with the women of the land, by whom they had many children. On this account they were unwilling to go back with him, or to acknowledge him as their sovereign; whereupon he went away, saying that he would return, or send so great a force as would compel them to submit to him. You knew well that we have always looked for him; and according to what this captain has told us of the

king and lord, who has sent him here, and also considering the quarter from which he says he has come, I hold it certain, and you must be of the same opinion, that this is the sovereign that we have expected; especially as he informs us, that he had some knowledge of us there. And since our predecessors did not render their just service to their sovereign lord, let us perform our duty; and let us render thanks to our gods, that he, who was so long expected by them, has come in our day. I must, therefore, entreat, since all this is well known to you, that hereafter, instead of regarding me as your sovereign, you will recognise and obey that great king, as he is our natural ruler, and receive this his captain in place of him; and all the tributes and services which till now you have rendered to me, you will hereafter render and yield to him, as I likewise contribute and yield all that he requires of me; and thus besides performing your duty, you will gratify and oblige me."

All this he said weeping, with more tears and sighs than becomes a man to exhibit; and likewise all the princes who were present wept so much, that for a long time they were unable to answer. And I assure your sacred Majesty that there was not a Spaniard who heard the discourse, that did not feel great compassion. After their grief had abated, they answered, that they recognized him as their sovereign, and had engaged to do whatever he might command; and that on this account, as well as for the reasons he had assigned, they were willing to act as he required; and that, from henceforth forever, they declared themselves the vassals of your Majesty, and all, and each for himself, would there promise, and did promise, to do and fulfil all that was com-

manded in the name of your Majesty as became good and loyal vassals; and to aid with tribute and services as they had heretofore done for Muteczuma, and as was their duty, together with whatever else might be required of them in the name of your Majesty. All this passed in the presence of a public notary, and was confirmed by a formal act; as well as by the testimony of many of our countrymen whom I had requested to be present.

After this solemn act and acknowledgment on the part of these lords towards your Majesty, I one day spoke to Muteczuma and said that your Highness needed gold for certain works that he had ordered to be completed, and I wished him to send some of his people, and I would send some of mine, to the lands and abodes of those lords who had submitted themselves on that occasion, to ask them to supply your Majesty with some part of what they possessed; since besides the necessity your Majesty had for the gold, it would serve as a beginning of their fealty, and your Highness would form a better opinion of their disposition to render him service by such a demonstration; and I also requested that he himself would give me what gold he had, as well as other things, in order that I might transmit them to your Majesty. He immediately requested that I would designate the Spaniards whom I wished to send on this business, and he distributed them two by two, and five by five, among many provinces and cities, the names of which I do not recollect, the records having perished, as they were numerous and different, some eighty, some one hundred leagues from the great city of Temixtitan; and with them he sent some of his own people, and directed them to go to the governors of pro-

vinces and cities, and say that I commanded each one of them to give a certain proportion of gold, which he prescribed. Accordingly all those caciques to whom he sent contributed freely what he demanded of them, as well jewels as plates and leaves of gold and silver, and whatever else they possessed; and melting down all that admitted it, we found that the fifth part belonging to your Majesty amounted to 32,400 pesos of gold and upwards, without reckoning the jewels of gold and silver, the feather-work, and precious stones, together with many other valuable articles that I set apart for your sacred Majesty, worth more than 100,000 ducats. These besides their monied value, were of so costly and curious workmanship, that considering their novelty and wonderful beauty, no price could be set on them; nor is it probable that any one of all the princes of the world to whose knowledge they might come, could produce any articles of equal splendor. It may seem to your Majesty like a fabulous story, but it is true, that all the natural objects, both on sea and land, of which Muteczuma has any knowledge, are imitated in gold and silver, as well as in precious stones and feathers, in such perfection that they appear almost the same. He gave me numerous specimens of many of these for your Highness, besides other things of which I had given him drawings, which he caused to be wrought in gold, such as images, crucifixes, medals, jewels, and necklaces, together with many other articles, of which he had imitations made. They assigned to your Majesty a fifth part of the silver, amounting to one hundred marks and upwards, which at my request the natives worked up into large and small dishes, porringers, cups, and spoons; and they made them as perfectly as they could understand their form

from our description. Beside these, Muteczuma gave me a large quantity of his cotton stuff, which, considering it was cotton without silk, could not be equalled in the whole world, either in texture, or in the variety and beauty of the colors, or in the workmanship. It comprised male and female apparel of remarkable elegance; ornamental hangings for bed-chambers, superior beyond comparison to those made of silk; together with other fabrics of cotton, as tapestries, designed for halls and temples; counterpanes, composed of feathers interwoven with cotton, and extremely beautiful; and many other articles, so numerous and ingenious, that I am unable to describe them to your Majesty. He also presented me with a dozen serbatans, used by himself for shooting, made with such admirable skill that they also exceed my power of description.* There were depicted on them a great variety of birds, animals, trees, flowers, and various other objects; the rims and extremities, of the width of a span, as well as the centre, were inlaid with gold, and curiously carved. To these he added a pouch of gold net-work, intended to contain the pellets or little balls, usually formed of clay, but which he said he would give me of gold; and also moulds of the same precious metal, for making the pellets; together with an infinite variety of other things.

* Serbatans, or cerbottanes, according to Clavigero, are long tubes or pipes, through which they shoot little balls at birds, &c., by blowing with the mouth.

CHAPTER V.

In order, most potent Sire, to convey to your Majesty a just conception of the great extent of this noble city of Temixtitan, and of the many rare and wonderful objects it contains; of the government and dominions of Mutezcuma, the sovereign; of the religious rites and customs that prevail, and the order that exists in this as well as other cities appertaining to his realm: it would require the labor of many accomplished writers, and much time for the completion of the task. I shall not be able to relate an hundredth part of what could be told respecting these matters; but I will endeavor to describe, in the best manner in my power, what I have myself seen; and imperfectly as I may succeed in the attempt, I am fully aware that the account will appear so wonderful as to be deemed scarcely worthy of credit; since even we who have seen these things with our own eyes, are yet so amazed as to be unable to comprehend their reality. But your Majesty may be assured that if there is any fault in my relation, either in regard to the present subject, or to any other matters of which I shall give your Majesty an account, it will arise from too great brevity rather than extravagance or prolixity in the details; and it seems to me but just to my Prince and Sovereign to declare the truth in the clearest manner, without saying any thing that would detract from it, or add to it.

Before I begin to describe this great city and the others already mentioned, it may be well for the better understanding of the subject to say something of the configu-

ration of Mexico,* in which they are situated, it being the principal seat of Muteczuma's power. This Province is in the form of a circle, surrounded on all sides by lofty and rugged mountains; its level surface comprises an area of about seventy leagues in circumference, including two lakes, that overspread nearly the whole valley, being navigated by boats more than fifty leagues round. One of these lakes contains fresh, and the other, which is the larger of the two, salt water. On one side of the lakes, in the middle of the valley, a range of highlands divides them from one another, with the exception of a narrow strait which lies between the highlands and the lofty sierras. This strait is a bow-shot wide, and connects the two lakes; and by this means a trade is carried on between the cities and other settlements on the lakes in canoes without the necessity of travelling by land. As the salt lake rises and falls with its tides like the sea, during the time of high water it pours into the other lake with the rapidity of a powerful stream; and on the other hand, when the tide has ebbed, the water runs from the fresh into the salt lake.

This great city of Temixtitan [Mexico] is situated in this salt lake, and from the main land to the denser parts of it, by whichever route one chooses to enter, the distance is two leagues. There are four avenues or entrances to the city, all of which are formed by artificial causeways, two spears' length in width. The city is as large as Seville or Cordova; its streets, I speak of the principal ones, are very wide and straight; some of these, and all the inferior ones, are half land and half water,

* Cortes applies this name to the Province in which the city, called by him Temixtitan, more properly Tenochtitlan, but now Mexico, was situated. See Humboldt, Nouv. Esp. l. i. c. i.

and are navigated by canoes. All the streets at intervals have openings, through which the water flows, crossing from one street to another; and at these openings, some of which are very wide, there are also very wide bridges, composed of large pieces of timber, of great strength and well put together; on many of these bridges ten horses can go abreast. Foreseeing that if the inhabitants of this city should prove treacherous, they would possess great advantages from the manner in which the city is constructed, since by removing the bridges at the entrances, and abandoning the place, they could leave us to perish by famine without our being able to reach the main land—as soon as I had entered it, I made great haste to build four brigantines, which were soon finished, and were large enough to take ashore three hundred men and the horses, whenever it should become necessary.

This city has many public squares, in which are situated the markets and other places for buying and selling. There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords, embracing the necessaries of life, as for instance articles of food, as well as jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails, and feathers. There are also exposed for sale wrought and unwrought stone, bricks burnt and unburnt, timber hewn and unhewn, of different sorts. There is a street for game, where every variety of birds found in the country are sold, as fowls, partridges, quails, wild ducks, fly-catchers, widgeons, turtle-doves, pigeons, reedbirds, parrots, sparrows, eagles, hawks, owls, and kestrels; they sell likewise the skins

of some birds of prey, with their feathers, head, beak, and claws. There are also sold rabbits, hares, deer, and little dogs, which are raised for eating and castrated. There is also an herb street, where may be obtained all sorts of roots and medicinal herbs that the country affords. There are apothecaries' shops, where prepared medicines, liquids, ointments, and plasters are sold; barbers' shops, where they wash and shave the head; and restaurateurs, that furnish food and drink at a certain price. There is also a class of men like those called in Castile porters, for carrying burthens. Wood and coals are seen in abundance, and brasiers of earthenware for burning coals; mats of various kinds for beds, others of a lighter sort for seats, and for halls and bedrooms. There are all kinds of green vegetables, especially onions, leeks, garlic, watercresses, nasturtium, borage, sorel, artichokes, and golden thistle; fruits also of numerous descriptions, amongst which are cherries and plums, similar to those in Spain; honey and wax from bees, and from the stalks of maize, which are as sweet as the sugar-cane; honey is also extracted from the plant called maguey,* which is superior to sweet or new wine; from the same plant they extract sugar and wine, which they also sell. Different kinds of cotton thread of all colors in skeins are exposed for sale in one quarter of the market, which has the appearance of the silk-market at Granada, although the former is supplied more abundantly. Painters' colors, as numerous as can be found in Spain, and as fine shades; deerskins dressed and undressed, dyed different colors; earthenware of a

* This is the plant known in this country under the name of the *Century Plant*, which is still much cultivated in Mexico for the purposes mentioned by Cortes. It usually flowers when eight or ten years old.

large size and excellent quality; large and small jars, jugs, pots, bricks, and an endless variety of vessels, all made of fine clay, and all or most of them glazed and painted; maize, or Indian corn, in the grain and in the form of bread, preferred in the grain for its flavor to that of the other islands and terra-firma; patés of birds and fish; great quantities of fish, fresh, salt, cooked and uncooked; the eggs of hens, geese, and of all the other birds I have mentioned, in great abundance, and cakes made of eggs; finally, every thing that can be found throughout the whole country is sold in the markets, comprising articles so numerous that to avoid prolixity, and because their names are not retained in my memory, or are unknown to me, I shall not attempt to enumerate them. Every kind of merchandise is sold in a particular street or quarter assigned to it exclusively, and thus the best order is preserved. They sell every thing by number or measure; at least so far we have not observed them to sell any thing by weight. There is a building in the great square that is used as an audience house, where ten or twelve persons, who are magistrates, sit and decide all controversies that arise in the market, and order delinquents to be punished. In the same square there are other persons who go constantly about among the people observing what is sold, and the measures used in selling; and they have been seen to break measures that were not true.

This great city contains a large number of temples,* or houses for their idols, very handsome edifices, which are situated in the different districts and the suburbs;

* The original has the word *mezquitas*, mosques; but as that term is applied in English exclusively to Mahometan places of worship, one of more general application is used in the translation.

in the principal ones religious persons of each particular sect are constantly residing, for whose use beside the houses containing the idols there are other convenient habitations. All these persons dress in black, and never cut or comb their hair from the time they enter the priesthood until they leave it; and all the sons of the principal inhabitants, both nobles and respectable citizens, are placed in the temples and wear the same dress from the age of seven or eight years until they are taken out to be married; which occurs more frequently with the first-born who inherit estates than with the others. The priests are debarred from female society, nor is any woman permitted to enter the religious houses. They also abstain from eating certain kinds of food, more at some seasons of the year than others. Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families. Around the interior of this enclosure there are handsome edifices, containing large halls and corridors, in which the religious persons attached to the temple reside. There are full forty towers, which are lofty and well built, the largest of which has fifty steps leading to its main body, and is higher than the tower of the principal church at Seville. The stone and wood of which they are constructed are so well wrought in every part, that nothing could be better done, for the interior of the chapels containing the idols consists of curious imagery, wrought in stone, with plaster ceilings, and wood-work carved in relief, and painted with figures of monsters and other objects. All these towers are the burial places of the nobles, and every chapel in them is

dedicated to a particular idol, to which they pay their devotions.

There are three halls in this grand temple, which contain the principal idols; these are of wonderful extent and height, and admirable workmanship, adorned with figures sculptured in stone and wood; leading from the halls are chapels with very small doors, to which the light is not admitted, nor are any persons except the priests, and not all of them. In these chapels are the images or idols, although, as I have before said, many of them are also found on the outside; the principal ones, in which the people have greatest faith and confidence, I precipitated from their pedestals, and cast them down the steps of the temple, purifying the chapels in which they had stood, as they were all polluted with human blood, shed in the sacrifices. In the place of these I put images of Our Lady and the Saints, which excited not a little feeling in Muteczuma and the inhabitants, who at first remonstrated, declaring that if my proceedings were known throughout the country, the people would rise against me; for they believed that their idols bestowed on them all temporal good, and if they permitted them to be ill-treated, they would be angry and withhold their gifts, and by this means the people would be deprived of the fruits of the earth and perish with famine. I answered, through the interpreters, that they were deceived in expecting any favors from idols, the work of their own hands, formed of unclean things; and that they must learn there was but one God, the universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens and the earth, and all things else, and had made them and us; that he was without beginning and immortal, and they were bound to adore and believe him, and no other

creature or thing. I said every thing to them I could to divert them from their idolatries, and draw them to a knowledge of God our Lord. Muteczuma replied, the others assenting to what he said, "That they had already informed me they were not the aborigines of the country, but that their ancestors had emigrated to it many years ago; and they fully believed that after so long an absence from their native land, they might have fallen into some errors; that I having more recently arrived must know better than themselves what they ought to believe; and that if I would instruct them in these matters, and make them understand the true faith, they would follow my directions, as being for the best." Afterwards, Muteczuma and many of the principal citizens remained with me until I had removed the idols, purified the chapels, and placed the images in them, manifesting apparent pleasure; and I forbade them sacrificing human beings to their idols, as they had been accustomed to do; because, besides being abhorrent in the sight of God, your sacred Majesty had prohibited it by law, and commanded to put to death whoever should take the life of another. Thus, from that time, they refrained from the practice, and during the whole period of my abode in that city, they were never seen to kill or sacrifice a human being.

The figures of the idols in which these people believe surpass in stature a person of more than the ordinary size; some of them are composed of a mass of seeds and leguminous plants, such as are used for food, ground and mixed together, and kneaded with the blood of human hearts taken from the breasts of living persons, from which a paste is formed in a sufficient quantity to form large statues. When these are completed they make

them offerings of the hearts of other victims, which they sacrifice to them, and besmear their faces with the blood. For every thing they have an idol, consecrated by the use of the nations that in ancient times honored the same gods. Thus they have an idol that they petition for victory in war; another for success in their labors; and so for every thing in which they seek or desire prosperity, they have their idols, which they honor and serve.

This noble city contains many fine and magnificent houses; which may be accounted for from the fact, that all the nobility of the country, who are the vassals of Muteczuma, have houses in the city, in which they reside a certain part of the year; and besides, there are numerous wealthy citizens who also possess fine houses. All these persons, in addition to the large and spacious apartments for ordinary purposes, have others, both upper and lower, that contain conservatories of flowers. Along one of the causeways that lead into the city are laid two pipes, constructed of masonry, each of which is two paces in width, and about five feet in height. An abundant supply of excellent water, forming a volume equal in bulk to the human body, is conveyed by one of these pipes, and distributed about the city, where it is used by the inhabitants for drinking and other purposes. The other pipe, in the mean time, is kept empty until the former requires to be cleansed, when the water is let into it and continues to be used till the cleansing is finished. As the water is necessarily carried over bridges on account of the salt water crossing its route, reservoirs resembling canals are constructed on the bridges, through which the fresh water is conveyed. These reservoirs are of the breadth of the body of an ox, and of the same length as the bridges. The whole

city is thus served with water, which they carry in canoes through all the streets for sale, taking it from the aqueduct in the following manner: the canoes pass under the bridges on which the reservoirs are placed, when men stationed above fill them with water, for which service they are paid. At all the entrances of the city, and in those parts where the canoes are discharged, that is, where the greatest quantity of provisions is brought in, huts are erected, and persons stationed as guards, who receive a *certum quid* of every thing that enters. I know not whether the sovereign receives this duty or the city, as I have not yet been informed; but I believe that it appertains to the sovereign, as in the markets of other provinces a tax is collected for the benefit of their cacique. In all the markets and public places of this city are seen daily many laborers and persons of various employments waiting for some one to hire them. The inhabitants of this city pay a greater regard to style in their mode of living, and are more attentive to elegance of dress and politeness of manners, than those of the other provinces and cities; since, as the Cacique* Muteczuma has his residence in the capital, and all the nobility, his vassals, are in the constant habit of meeting there, a general courtesy of demeanor necessarily prevails. But not to be prolix in describing what relates to the affairs of this great city, although it is with difficulty I refrain from proceeding, I will say no more than that the man-

* The title invariably given to Muteczuma (or Montezuma) in these Despatches, is simply Señor, in its sense of Lord, or (to use an Indian word) Cacique; which is also given to the chiefs or governors of districts or provinces, whether independent or feudatories. The title of Emperador (Emperor), now generally applied to the Mexican ruler, is never conferred on him by Cortes, nor any other implying royalty, although in the beginning of this Despatch he assures Charles V. that the country is extensive enough to constitute an empire.

ners of the people, as shown in their intercourse with one another, are marked by as great an atttention to the proprieties of life as in Spain, and good order is equally well observed; and considering that they are a barbarous people, without the knowledge of God, having no intercourse with civilized nations, these traits of character are worthy of admiration.

In regard to the domestic appointments of Muteczuma, and the wonderful grandeur and state that he maintains, there is so much to be told, that I assure your Highness, I know not where to begin my relation, so as to be able to finish any part of it. For, as I have already stated, what can be more wonderful, than that a barbarous monarch, as he is, should have every object found in his dominions imitated in gold, silver, precious stones, and feathers; the gold and silver being wrought so naturally as not to be surpassed by any smith in the world; the stone work executed with such perfection that it is difficult to conceive what instruments could have been used; and the feather work superior to the finest productions in wax or embroidery. The extent of Muteczuma's dominions has not been ascertained, since to whatever point he despatched his messengers, even two hundred leagues from his capital, his commands were obeyed, although some of his provinces were in the midst of countries with which he was at war. But as nearly as I have been able to learn, his territories are equal in extent to Spain itself, for he sent messengers to the inhabitants of a city called Cumatan, (requiring them to become subjects of your Majesty,) which is sixty leagues beyond that part of Putunchán watered by the river Grijalva, and two hundred and thirty leagues distant from the great city; and I sent some of our people

a distance of one hundred and fifty leagues in the same direction. All the principal chiefs of these provinces, especially those in the vicinity of the capital, reside, as I have already stated, the greater part of the year in that great city, and all or most of them have their oldest sons in the service of Muteczuma. There are fortified places in all the provinces, garrisoned with his own men, where are also stationed his governors and collectors of the rents and tribute, rendered him by every province; and an account is kept of what each is obliged to pay, as they have characters and figures made on paper that are used for this purpose. Each province renders a tribute of its own peculiar productions, so that the sovereign receives a great variety of articles from different quarters. No prince was ever more feared by his subjects, both in his presence and absence. He possessed out of the city as well as within, numerous villas, each of which had its peculiar sources of amusement, and all were constructed in the best possible manner for the use of a great prince and lord. Within the city his palaces were so wonderful that it is hardly possible to describe their beauty and extent; I can only say that in Spain there is nothing equal to them.

There was one palace somewhat inferior to the rest, attached to which was a beautiful garden with balconies extending over it, supported by marble columns, and having a floor formed of jasper elegantly inlaid. There were apartments in this palace sufficient to lodge two princes of the highest rank with their retinues. There were likewise belonging to it ten pools of water, in which were kept the different species of water birds found in this country, of which there is a great variety, all of which are domesticated; for the sea birds there were

pools of salt water, and for the river birds, of fresh water. The water is let off at certain times to keep it pure, and is replenished by means of pipes. Each species of bird is supplied with the food natural to it, which it feeds upon when wild. Thus fish is given to birds that usually eat it; worms, maize, and the finer seeds, to such as prefer them. And I assure your Highness, that to the birds accustomed to eat fish there is given the enormous quantity of ten arrobas* every day, taken in the salt lake. The emperor has three hundred men whose sole employment is to take care of these birds; and there are others whose only business is to attend to the birds that are in bad health.

Over the pools for the birds there are corridors and galleries, to which Muteczuma resorts, and from which he can look out and amuse himself with the sight of them. There is an apartment in the same palace in which are men, women and children, whose faces, bodies, hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes are white from their birth. The emperor has another very beautiful palace, with a large court-yard, paved with handsome flags, in the style of a chess-board. There were also cages, about nine feet in height and six paces square, each of which was half covered with a roof of tiles, and the other half had over it a wooden grate, skilfully made. Every cage contained a bird of prey, of all the species found in Spain, from the kestrel to the eagle, and many unknown there. There was a great number of each kind; and in the covered part of the cages there was a perch, and another on the outside of the grating, the former of which the birds used in the night time, and when it rained; and the other enabled them to enjoy the sun and air. To all

* Two hundred and fifty pounds weight.

these birds fowls were daily given for food, and nothing else. There were in the same palace several large halls on the ground floor, filled with immense cages built of heavy pieces of timber, well put together, in all or most of which were kept lions, tigers, wolves, foxes, and a variety of animals of the cat kind, in great numbers, which were also fed on fowls. The care of these animals and birds was assigned to three hundred men. There was another palace that contained a number of men and women of monstrous size, and also dwarfs, and crooked and ill-formed persons, each of which had their separate apartments. These also had their respective keepers. As to the other remarkable things that the emperor had in his city for his amusement, I can only say that they were numerous and of various kinds.

He was served in the following manner. Every day as soon as it was light, six hundred nobles and men of rank were in attendance at the palace, who either sat, or walked about the halls and galleries, and passed their time in conversation, but without entering the apartment where his person was. The servants and attendants of these nobles remained in the court-yards, of which there were two or three of great extent, and in the adjoining street, which was also very spacious. They all remained in attendance from morning till night; and when his meals were served, the nobles were likewise served with equal profusion, and their servants and secretaries also had their allowance. Daily his larder and wine-cellar were open to all who wished to eat and drink. The meals were served by three or four hundred youths, who brought on an infinite variety of dishes; indeed, whenever he dined or supped, the table was loaded with every kind of flesh, fish, fruits, and vegetables, that the

country produced. As the climate is cold, they put a chafing-dish with live coals under every plate and dish, to keep them warm. The meals were served in a large hall, in which Muteczuma was accustomed to eat, and the dishes quite filled the room, which was covered with mats and kept very clean. He sat on a small cushion curiously wrought of leather. During the meals there were present, at a little distance from him, five or six elderly caciques, to whom he presented some of the food. And there was constantly in attendance one of the servants, who arranged and handed the dishes, and who received from others whatever was wanted for the supply of the table. Both at the beginning and end of every meal, they furnished water for the hands; and the napkins used on these occasions were never used a second time; this was the case also with the plates and dishes, which were not brought again, but new ones in place of them; it was the same also with the chafing-dishes. He is also dressed every day in four different suits, entirely new, which he never wears a second time. None of the caciques who enter his palace have their feet covered, and when those for whom he sends enter his presence, they incline their heads and look down, bending their bodies; and when they address him, they do not look him in the face; this arises from excessive modesty and reverence. I am satisfied that it proceeds from respect, since certain caciques reproved the Spaniards for their boldness in addressing me, saying that it showed a want of becoming deference. Whenever Muteczuma appeared in public, which was seldom the case, all those who accompanied him, or whom he accidentally met in the streets, turned away without looking towards him, and others prostrated themselves until he had passed. One

of the nobles always preceded him on these occasions, carrying three slender rods erect, which I suppose was to give notice of the approach of his person. And when they descended from the litters, he took one of them in his hand, and held it until he reached the place where he was going. So many and various were the ceremonies and customs observed by those in the service of Muteczuma, that more space than I can spare would be required for the details, as well as a better memory than I have to recollect them; since no sultan or other infidel lord, of whom any knowledge now exists, ever had so much ceremonial in their courts.

CHAPTER VI.

I REMAINED in this great city for the purpose of providing whatever the service of your Sacred Majesty required, and was engaged in establishing peace and an acknowledgment of your authority amongst numerous provinces and districts, containing a vast population, many large cities, towns, and castles, and in the discovery of mines; ascertaining and seeking information of whatever relates to the local affairs of the countries belonging to the jurisdiction of Muteczuma, as well as others bordering thereupon and known to him. The extent and wonderful productiveness of these regions are quite incredible; and both Muteczuma and the native inhabitants promote my views with as much readiness and good will as if they had recognized *ab initio* your Sacred Majesty as their natural lord and sovereign; and they do with the same cheerfulness all things that I command them in your Majesty's name.

In these concerns and others of no less advantage to the service of your Royal Highness, I was employed from the eighth of November, 1519, till the beginning of the present month of May, [1520,] when, being quietly established in this metropolis, sending out parties of Spaniards in various directions, promoting the peace and settlement of the country, and awaiting with impatience the return of the ships with your Majesty's answer to my former despatch, in order to forward by them what I now send, together with all the gold and jewels that I had been able to amass for your Majesty—there came

to me certain of the native inhabitants, vassals of Mutezuma, from the sea-coast, and informed me that eighteen vessels had arrived before the port or bay of St. Juan, near the mountains of St. Martin; that they knew not who they were, for as soon as they espied them they had come to bring me the intelligence. Besides these Indians, there came to me likewise a native of the island of Fernandina, bringing a letter from a Spaniard whom I had stationed on that part of the sea-coast, in order that if the ships arrived he might give them some account of me, and of the town in the vicinity of that port, with a view to their safety. In this letter he says—"That on such a day there hove in sight before the harbor of St. Juan a single ship; that he had looked as far as he could see along the coast, and had been unable to descry any other, and he believed it was the vessel I had despatched to your Sacred Majesty, since it was time for it to arrive. In order to satisfy me of this, he was waiting for the ship to come up into the harbor to inform himself about it, and then to come and bring me the account."

As soon as I had read this letter I despatched two Spaniards by different routes, in order that they might not miss any messenger that should come from the ship. I directed them to proceed to the harbor in question, and ascertain what ships had arrived, where they came from, and what they had brought; and then to return with the greatest possible speed to bring me the intelligence. I also despatched another messenger to the town of Vera Cruz, to inform the authorities of what was known respecting these ships, that they might get additional information and communicate it to me; and another to the captain whom I had sent with one hundred and fifty

men to form a settlement at the port of Cuacucalco, to whom I wrote that he should remain wherever the messenger might meet him, and not proceed until he had again heard from me, as I had received intelligence of the arrival of certain ships in the port; but it afterwards appeared that he knew of their arrival at the time when he received my letter.

After these messengers were gone, fifteen days passed before I heard any thing more, or received any answer from them, which not a little surprised me. But at the expiration of that time, other Indians, also vassals of Muteczuma, came, from whom I learned that the ships in question had already cast anchor in the port of San Juan, and the people had landed from them; that they brought with them eighty horses, eight hundred men, and ten or twelve pieces of ordnance, all which were depicted on the paper of the country to be shown to Muteczuma. They also reported that the Spaniard whom I had stationed on the coast, and the other messengers that I had sent, were with the new comers, and that they had informed those Indians, (who brought the intelligence,) that the leader of the party would not suffer them to return to me, of which they wished me to be informed. As soon as this was known, I determined to send a priest* I had brought with me, with letters from myself and the Alcaldes and Regidores of the town of Vera Cruz, then in the city, addressed to the captain and others arrived at that port, informing them fully of the success that had attended me in this country; that I was in possession of many cities, towns, and fortified places, which had been taken and subdued, and were now in peaceful subjection

* Fr. Bartolomé de Olmedo, of the religious order de la Merced, who came as chaplain to the expedition, with the Licentiate Juan Dias.—L.

to your Majesty, the chief ruler of the country being a prisoner in my hands; that I was then in the great city, describing its character, and the gold and jewels which I held for your Majesty; and that I had transmitted to your Majesty an account of this country. And I begged them to inform me who they were, and that if they were native subjects of the kingdoms and dominions of your Highness, they would write me whether they had come to this land by the command of your Majesty to found colonies and abide here, or intended to proceed farther, or to return home again; or if they were in distress, I would supply them with every thing in my power. But should they not belong to your Highness' dominions, I begged that they would notwithstanding inform me whether they had suffered any disaster, as I would do all in my power for their relief. If it were otherwise, I desired them, on behalf of your Majesty, that they would at once depart from your territory without landing upon it—intimating that if they did not, I should march against them with all the forces under my command, both Spanish and native, and capture or put them to death, as intruders upon the realm and dominions of the king my master.

The priest having departed with this despatch, there arrived five days after at the city of Temixtitan, twenty Spaniards, of the number of those whom I had stationed at the town of Vera Cruz, who brought with them a priest and two lay brothers taken in that place; from the latter I learned that the fleet and men in that port were acting under the orders of Diego Velazquez, [Governor of Cuba,] and were commanded in person by one Panfilo Narvaez, an inhabitant of the island Fernandina [Cuba]; that they had brought eighty horses, several pieces of artillery, and eight hundred foot soldiers,

amongst whom were eighty musketeers and one hundred and twenty bowmen; that Narvaez had come in the capacity of Captain General and Lieutenant Governor over these countries, by the appointment of Diego Velazquez, from whom he had received your Majesty's orders; and that the messengers I had sent, and the man I had stationed on the coast, had been taken by Narvaez, and were not suffered to depart—by whom he had been informed of the town I had built twelve leagues from that port, and of the people residing there, as well as of the party I had sent to Cuacucalco, in the province called Tuchitebeque, thirty leagues from the port; and likewise of all that I had accomplished in the country in the service of your Highness; the cities and towns I had conquered and reduced to a state of peaceful subjection, especially the great city of Temixtitan; the gold and jewels that the country afforded; and all things else showing the success of my operations. In consequence of their statements, Narvaez had sent these persons to Vera Cruz for the purpose of inducing the people who were there to join his standard and declare against me. They also brought with them more than a hundred letters, that Narvaez and his people had sent to those at Vera Cruz, desiring them to place confidence in whatever the priest and those with him should say; promising, on behalf of D. Velazquez and himself acting in his name, that if they did so, they should be well rewarded; but that they who acted otherwise would be subjected to severe treatment. These and other things contained in the letters the priest and those with him reported.

Almost at the same moment there arrived a Spaniard of the party that I had sent to Cuacucalco, who brought me letters from the commander there, one Juan Velazquez

de Leon, informing me that the expedition in question was commanded by Panfilo de Narvaez, acting in the name of Diego Velazquez; and forwarding a letter which Narvaez had sent by an Indian to him, as a relative of Diego Velazquez, and brother-in-law of Narvaez; in which Narvaez stated that he had learned by some messengers of mine that he was at that place with a party of men, and bade him come directly to him with his men; for by so doing he would act with propriety, and perform his duty to his relatives; that he was fully of the belief that I had controlled him by force; these and other things were contained in the letter of Narvaez to Captain Juan Velazquez. That officer, however, feeling that the service of your Majesty was of stronger obligation, not only refused to accept the offers of Narvaez, but immediately set out, after having despatched the letter to me, and came to join me with all his force.

Afterwards I informed myself by this priest and the others with him respecting many things, especially of the intentions of Diego Velazquez and Narvaez; that they had been induced to despatch this expedition against me on account of my having sent a report of my operations and of the country to your Majesty instead of Diego Velasquez, and that they had come with a deadly purpose to destroy me and many of those under my command, whom they had already marked as their intended victims. I also ascertained that the Licentiate Figueroa, President of the Royal Audience in the island of Española, and the judges and officials of your Highness residing there, when it came to their knowledge that the said Diego Velasquez had got ready a fleet for this avowed purpose, and it being apparent to them that the consequences would be injurious to your Majesty's

service, despatched the Licentiate Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon, one of their number, with an order from them, requiring and commanding Diego Velazquez to stop the sailing of the expedition. On his arrival Ayllon found Diego Velasquez with all his fleet at the extreme point of the island Fernandina, ready to set sail, when he immediately required both the commander and all those engaged with him to desist from the enterprise, as injurious to the service of your Highness, imposing heavy penalties in case of disobedience; notwithstanding which, and in open violation of the requisitions and orders of the Licentiate, the fleet had been despatched by Velasquez. Thinking to be able to avert the mischief likely to be the result of this expedition, the evil design of which was well known to him and others, Ayllon had also embarked and arrived with it.

I sent this priest with a letter to Narvaez, in which I informed him I had learned by the priest and those who had come with him, that he had the command of the force which had arrived in the ships, whereat I was much pleased, since otherwise I might have supposed the expedition an unfriendly one, as the messengers despatched by me had not returned; nevertheless I was surprised, that, as he knew I was here in the service of your Highness, he had not written or sent a messenger, apprising me of his arrival; especially when he knew that the information must afford me pleasure, as well on account of our old friendship, as from the circumstance that he came in the service of your Highness, which I was most desirous of promoting; but, on the contrary, had sent secret agents with bribes to induce the men under my command, and in the service of your Majesty, to throw off their allegiance and join him, as if we were

infidels, and they christians, or they vassals of your Highness, and we traitors. I therefore begged him that henceforth he would take no steps before he had informed me of the cause of his coming. I added that I had heard he was entitled Captain General and Lieutenant Governor by Diego Velazquez, and that he had caused himself to be so proclaimed on his arrival in this country; that he had constituted alcaldes and regidores, and administered justice, which proceedings were injurious to your Highness' service, and in violation of all the laws; since this country, appertaining to your Majesty, and being settled by your subjects, possessed a judicial tribunal for the administration of justice, and that he ought not to assume those duties without being first acknowledged by the people, even if he had brought the commands of your Majesty. And I begged and required of him that if he had brought any such orders he should present them to me, and to the municipal authorities of Vera Cruz; when they would be obeyed both by them and me, as the commands of our king and natural lord, and duly executed so far as conduced to your Majesty's royal service. For I was in the great city, and held the sovereign a prisoner in it; I also had in my possession a large amount of gold and jewels, belonging to your Highness, as well as to myself and my companions, which I dared not leave, lest on my departure from the city the people should rebel, and I should lose all the gold and jewels, and the city itself; especially since if I lost the city, I should also lose possession of the whole country.

I also gave the same priest a letter for the Licentiate Ayllon; who, as I afterwards learned, when the priest arrived at the port, had been arrested by Narvaez, and

sent back a prisoner, two vessels having been employed for that purpose.

The day on which the priest departed there came a messenger from the people at Vera Cruz, who brought me intelligence that all the natives of the country had risen in rebellion, and joined Narvaez, especially those of the city of Cempoal and its dependencies; and that not one of them could be induced to perform any service in the town, either in the garrison or otherwise, because, as they said, Narvaez had told them I was a traitor, and that he had come to seize me and all my companions, but that having taken us prisoners he should leave the country. They added, that Narvaez had a large force, while mine was but small; that he had many horses and a great deal of artillery, while I had little of either; and that their motto was, "*viva quien vence*," long live the victorious! I was also informed by the same messenger that, according to the report of the Indians, Narvaez was about to occupy the city of Cempoal with his army, and having already informed himself of its distance from Vera Cruz, the people of that place believed, from the accounts they had received of his wicked purposes, that he intended to attack them, aided by the Indians of Cempoal, and they gave me to understand that they should abandon the town rather than contend with him, and to avoid reproach take refuge in the mountains under the protection of a chief who is a vassal of your Highness and a friend to us; there they intended to remain until I sent them directions what to do.

As I perceived the great mischief that was about to result from this matter, and as the country had risen in support of Narvaez, it appeared to me, that by going myself where he was, I should be able to quell the move-

ment; since, when the Indians saw me in person they would not dare to show symptoms of disaffection. I also thought that I might bring about an arrangement with Narvaez, by which so great a cause of scandal as had arisen might be effectually checked. Therefore I set out on the same day, leaving the garrison well supplied with maize and water, and containing five hundred men with several pieces of cannon. Taking the rest of the people that I had there, about seventy in number, I pursued my journey, accompanied by some of the principal personages of the court of Muteczuma; to the latter, before I left, I had much to say, and amongst other things, "that he should reflect that he was a vassal of your Highness, and that he was now about to receive from your Majesty a reward for the services he had rendered; and that I left entrusted to his care a number of my Spaniards, together with all the gold and jewels which he had given me in compliance with the orders of your Highness; that I was going to meet the people who had arrived in the country, to ascertain who they were, as I had not yet been informed, but believed they must be bad men, and not vassals of your Highness." He then promised to supply whatever was necessary, and to take good care of what I had left belonging to your Majesty; and added that his people who accompanied me would take me by a route that led entirely within his territory, and would provide every thing I might want; begging me to inform him if we met with any troublesome persons on the road, that he might immediately despatch a sufficient force to attack and drive them away. All this I listened to with pleasure, and declared that, in consideration of these services, your Highness would command me to bestow on him great

rewards; and I gave many jewels and much cotton cloth to him and his son, and to several caciques who were then with him.

In the city called Chururtecal, [Cholula,] I met with Juan Velazquez, the captain whom, as I have already mentioned, I sent to Cuacuacalco, who was returning with all his people; some of them, being indisposed, I sent to the city, and with the captain and the rest of the party I continued my route. Fifteen leagues beyond the city of Chururtecal, I fell in with a religious padre of my company, whom I had sent to the port to ascertain what people had arrived there in the fleet. He brought me a letter from Narvaez, in which he stated that he had brought a commission to take possession of the country for Diego Velazquez; that I must instantly repair to the place where he was, for the purpose of yielding obedience thereto; and that he had established there a town with alcaldes and regidores for its government. I also learned from the same priest that they had taken the Licentiate Ayllon, and his secretary and alguazil, and sent them away in two ships; that they had offered him money with which he might induce some of my people to pass over to the service of Narvaez; and had caused a review to take place before him and certain Indians that were with him, of their whole force, both foot and horse, discharging the artillery pieces on board the ships and on shore in order to strike terror into them, saying to the priest—"See, how can you stand against us if you do not act according to our wishes?" He also told me that there was a native cacique with Narvaez, who was a vassal of Muteczuma, being the governor over all his territory along the sea-coast; and he knew that this man had addressed Narvaez on behalf of Mutec-

zuma, and given him some trinkets of gold; and that Narvaez had in return made him certain small presents. He also stated that Narvaez had despatched messengers from thence to Muteczuma, saying that he would set him at liberty, and would seize me and all my companions, and immediately depart and abandon the country; and that he was not in quest of gold, but only sought to make prisoners of me and my men; after effecting which he should leave his dominions and his people in perfect freedom. Finally, I ascertained that it was his intention to assume jurisdiction over the country without seeking any public acknowledgment of his authority; and that in case I and those of my party did not choose to recognize him as our commander and judge in the name of Diego Velazquez, he would march against us for the purpose of exterminating us by war; to which end he had formed an alliance with the natives of the country, especially with Muteczuma by means of his messengers.

When I saw so manifestly the great extent of injury that would ensue to your Majesty's service from the measures taken by this person, especially on being informed of the great force he had brought with him, and of his orders from Diego Velazquez to hang me and certain of my companions, who were marked for this fate, as soon as he should get us into his power—I did not hesitate to approach him, with the belief that I could make him understand the great disservice he was doing your Highness, and divert him from the mad design and injurious purpose with which he had come. I thus pursued my course, and when fifteen leagues distant from the city of Cempoal, in which Narvaez was encamped, there came to me the priest already mentioned, who had been previously sent to me from Vera

Cruz, (by whom I had written to Narvaez and the Licentiate Ayllon,) together with another priest, and one Andrew de Duero, an inhabitant of the island of Fernandina, who had also arrived with Narvaez; who, in answer to my letter, informed me, on the part of Narvaez, that I must yield obedience to him as my commander, and deliver the country into his power, as otherwise I should suffer great injury, Narvaez having a large force, and I only a small one; that besides the many Spanish troops he had with him, most of the people of the country were in his favor; and that if I would give him possession of the country, he would surrender the ships to me, and all the provisions I might require, and allow me and all who wished to leave with me, to embark, taking every thing that we wished to carry away, without interposing the slightest obstacle in any respect. And one of the priests informed me that Diego Velazquez had authorized them to make this arrangement with me, having for this purpose given to Narvaez and the two priests a joint commission, so that they could adjust matters as I might please.

I answered them that I had seen no orders from your Highness directing me to deliver up the country, and that if Narvaez had brought any, he should present them to me, and to the proper tribunal of Vera Cruz, according to the regulations and customs of Spain, where I would repair in readiness to obey them; but that until this was done, no inducement of interest or favor would prevail upon me to comply with his wishes; that I and my companions would rather die in defence of the country which we had gained, and possessed in a secure and tranquil state, and that we could not turn traitors, or forfeit our loyalty to our sovereign. Many other considerations influenced me to decline their proposals, and I de-

clared that I would listen to nothing but an order from your Highness, imposing the duty upon me—which they never chose to show me. In conclusion, these priests, Andrew de Duero, and myself agreed, that Narvaez, attended by ten persons, and I with as many others, should have a peaceable interview, when he should make known to me his instructions, if he had brought any, to which I should give my answer; for this purpose I, on my part, sent a passport signed by myself, and he likewise gave me another in return, subscribed with his name; which, however, as it seemed to me, he had no idea of observing; for it was planned that the interview should be so arranged as to enable them to despatch me at once; and two of the ten persons who were to come with him, were selected to execute this purpose, while the others were to engage with my attendants. Thus they said if I was killed, the object would be accomplished; as in truth it would have been, if God, who interposes in such cases, had not thwarted the design by granting me certain notice of it at the same time that the pass was brought to me. This plot being discovered, I wrote a letter to Narvaez, and another to the three commissioners, in which I stated to them that I had learned their treacherous design, and refused to have the interview in the manner agreed upon.

Immediately after this occurrence, I sent certain requisitions and orders to Narvaez, demanding of him that, if he had brought any orders from your Highness, he should give me notice of them, and that until he did so he must not assume the title of commander or magistrate, nor intermeddle with any of the duties connected with those offices, under a certain penalty which I imposed upon him. I likewise, in the same manner, commanded

all persons who were with Narvaez, that they should not treat, nor obey, the said Narvaez as captain or magistrate; but on the other hand, that within a certain time which I indicated in the order, they should appear before me, that I might be able to instruct them what they should do in the service of your Highness; declaring, that if they did otherwise, I would proceed against them as traitors and perfidious subjects in rebellion against their king, and plotting to usurp his lands and dominions, to give them to persons to whom they did not belong, and who were destitute of all claim and just right thereto. And that to carry this order into execution, in case they did not appear before me, nor perform what was enjoined in said order, I should proceed to arrest and imprison them conformably to the law.

As an answer to my proceedings, Narvaez caused the notary and one other person by whom I had sent my notices, to be apprehended, together with several Indians who had gone with them, all of whom were detained until another messenger arrived from me, to inquire what had become of the others. He then caused all his force to pass in review before them, and uttered threats against them and me, if we did not deliver up the land. Seeing this, and that there was no way in which I could avoid so great a calamity, and that the natives of the country were becoming restless, and growing more so from day to day, commending myself to God, and disregarding all fear of the loss that might ensue—reflecting that if I died in the service of my king, and in the defence and protection of his dominions, to prevent their being usurped, sufficient glory would accrue to me and my companions—I gave orders to Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor,*

* This office corresponds in a certain degree to that of High Sheriff.

to arrest the said Narvaez and those persons who styled themselves alcaldes and regidores; and for this purpose I placed eighty men under his command to proceed with him to make the arrest;—taking myself one hundred and seventy others, (the whole number being two hundred and fifty,) without artillery or horse, but on foot, I followed the alguazil mayor to support him, in case the said Narvaez and the rest should choose to resist the execution of his process.

On the same day that the alguazil mayor and myself arrived with our party near the city of Cempoal, where Narvaez had quartered his army, he received information of our approach, and sallied out with eighty horse and five hundred foot, leaving the rest of his force within their quarters in the great temple of the city, which was strongly fortified. Having marched out within a league of the place where we were, and not finding us, he concluded that the Indians who had given the alarm had deceived him, and returned to the city, taking the precaution to have his whole force in readiness, and posting two men about a league from the city to give notice of our approach. As I was desirous of avoiding as much as possible all offensive appearances, it seemed to me that it would be best to go by night, without being discovered, if practicable, directly to the quarters of Narvaez, (with the situation of which we were all well acquainted,) and seize him at once; for I thought that as soon as he was taken prisoner there would be no further trouble. The others with him would then yield obedience to the laws, especially those who had been forcibly pressed into the service by Diego Velazquez, or threatened by him with the loss of their Indian slaves in the Island of Fernandina.

On Easter day, a little after midnight, I marched for the quarters of Narvaez, and before I met with the men he had posted outside of the city, the scouts I had sent forward took one of them prisoner, but the other made his escape; from the former I received information of the state of things in the city. I then hastened as much as possible to prevent the one who had escaped from arriving before me, and giving notice of my approach; but notwithstanding my exertions, he was half an hour in advance of me. When I reached the city Narvaez had all his men in full armor, and the horses caparisoned, in complete readiness, and two hundred men guarded every square. We moved so silently that when we were at last discovered, and the alarm was given, I had entered the square in which were the quarters occupied by the whole army, and had taken possession of three or four towers, besides the other strong buildings that stood in the square. In one of these towers where Narvaez was quartered, the staircase was defended by nineteen matchlocks; but we mounted it with such rapidity that they had not time to put fire to more than one of the pieces, which, it pleased God, did not go off, nor occasion any injury. So our men ascended the tower until they reached the apartment of Narvaez, where he and about fifty of his men fought with the alguazil mayor and the rest that had gone up, and although the latter called upon them many times to surrender to your Highness, they refused until the building was set on fire, when they at last gave in.

While the alguazil mayor was employed in taking Narvaez, I with the rest of our force, who came to their assistance, guarded the ascent of the tower, and caused the artillery to be seized and used for our defence. Thus

without the loss of more than two men, who were killed by the discharge of a gun, all those that we wished to arrest were taken, and the rest deprived of their arms, promising obedience to your Majesty's officers of justice; declaring that until then they had been deceived, having been told that Narvaez had orders from your Majesty, and that I had been guilty of rebellion in this country, and was a traitor to your Majesty, together with many other things of a similar character. As soon as they learned the truth, and understood the bad motives and ruinous purposes of Diego Velazquez and Narvaez, they were struck with the wickedness of the plot, and all expressed their joy that God had seen fit to bring it to an end. And I assure your Majesty that if God had not mysteriously interposed, and the victory had been on the side of Narvaez, there would have been a greater destruction of life than has taken place among Spaniards for a long period in proportion to the numbers engaged. He would have without doubt executed the design that he had formed, and which Diego Velazquez had commanded, which was to hang me and many of my companions, so that no one would have survived to call them to account. I was afterwards informed by the Indians, that they had reflected in case I was taken by Narvaez, as he had assured them would happen, that it could not be done without serious loss to both parties, and that many Spaniards would fall on both sides. In the mean time they resolved to destroy the men I had left in the city of Mexico, whom they had accordingly attacked. And they intended afterwards to make a united assault on all that remained in the country, so that they and their lands might be set free, and the memory of the Spaniards consigned to oblivion. Your Highness may be assured that

if they had accomplished their design, it would have required more than twenty years to subdue and recover a country, which is now already ours and peaceably secured.

Two days after the capture of Narvaez—as it was impossible to support so many people in that city, especially as it was already in part destroyed by Narvaez and his party, who had plundered it, the inhabitants having fled, leaving their houses desolate—I despatched two captains each with two hundred men, the one to build a town in the port of Cuicicacalco [Guazacualco], where I had before sent a party for the same purpose, as I have informed your Highness; and the other to a certain river, which the ships of Francisco de Garay were said to have visited, that I might take secure possession of it. I also sent two hundred men to Vera Cruz, where I caused the ships to proceed in which Narvaez had arrived.

CHAPTER VII.

I REMAINED at Cempoal with the rest of the men to provide for the interests of your Majesty. I also despatched a messenger to the city of Temixtitan, by whom I made known to the Spaniards I had left there the success of my enterprise. This messenger returned from thence in twelve days, and brought me letters from the alcalde whom I had left in authority, in which he informed me that the Indians had attacked the garrison on all sides, and set fire to it in many places; that they had sunk mines about it, placing our people in imminent danger; all of whom would perish, unless Muteczuma should command the hostile operations to cease; that at the present moment they were closely invested, and although the fighting had been discontinued, yet no one was suffered to go two steps from the garrison. It was added, that a great part of their supplies had been forcibly seized, and that the enemy had burned the four brigantines I had built there; and finally, that our people were in extreme distress, and begged me to come to their aid with the greatest possible haste. Seeing to what extremities they were reduced, and that if I did not instantly fly to their relief, not only would their lives be sacrificed, together with all the gold, silver, and jewels, of which we had become possessed, as well the portion appertaining to your Highness, as that assigned to the army and myself; but that it would also involve the loss of the greatest and noblest city in the whole new world, and with it every thing we had gained, since it

was the chief seat of the empire, to which all the rest yielded obedience—I therefore forthwith despatched messengers to the officers I had sent away with parties of men, informing them what I had heard from the capital, and directing that wherever they might be, they should turn about at once, and make their way back by the shortest possible route to Tlascaltecal, where I would join them with all the artillery in my power and with seventy horse; and when they had arrived, on reviewing my force, I found it consisted of seventy horse and five hundred foot. With these troops I departed in the greatest haste for the capital; on the whole route, not a single person owing allegiance to Muteczuma came out to receive me, as was the case on former occasions; the entire country seeming to have lost its population on account of some disaster. My suspicions were excited by this appearance of things; I feared that our countrymen who were left in the city had all been murdered, and that the people of the country had assembled in one mass, waiting to attack me in some narrow pass, where they might have the advantage of me.

Under these apprehensions I proceeded with great precaution until I reached the city of Tesnacan, [Tescuco,] which, as I have already informed your Majesty, lies on the coast of that great lake. Here I inquired of some of the people concerning the Spaniards who were left in the capital, and I learned that they were alive. I then bade them bring me a canoe, as I wished to despatch one of my men to ascertain the truth, and that in the mean while, during his absence, they should leave with me one of their citizens who appeared to exercise some authority, as the principal men of the place whom I had seen on former occasions had all disappeared. This person

caused a canoe to be brought, and sent several Indians to accompany my messenger, while he himself remained with me.

When the messenger was about departing for the city of Temixtitan, he perceived another canoe crossing the lake, and waited until it had reached the shore; in this came one of the Spaniards who had been left in the city, from whom I learned that they were all living, except five or six who had been killed by the Indians. The rest were still closely confined to their quarters, which they were not allowed to leave for a moment, and were not even supplied with the necessaries of life except at a very high price. But since they had heard of my approach to the city, their treatment had improved, and Muteczuma said that he only waited for my arrival to give them permission to go about the city as usual. In company with this Spaniard came also a messenger from Muteczuma, who sent me word that he presumed I knew what had occurred in the city, and feared I should be deeply incensed against him, and return with the intention of making him suffer for what had been done; but he begged me to entertain no such feelings towards him, as he regretted as much as I did the occurrences in question, which had taken place without his agency or consent. He also said many other things to appease my anger, and desired me to return to my quarters in the city as before, promising to execute my commands in every respect as he had been wont to do. I answered his message by saying that I should return without taking offence against him for what had happened, as I was fully aware of his friendly feelings, and should do as he requested.

On the following day, which was the eve of St. John

the Baptist, I proceeded on my route, and at night lodged three leagues from the great city. The next day after hearing mass I resumed the march, and about noon entered the city;* seeing but few persons, and observing the gates removed from the cross streets, I did not like the appearance of things, although I thought that the people were alarmed at what had taken place, and that when I should be re-established in the city all would be quiet again. I marched directly to the fortress, in which, and in the great temple adjoining it, all my troops were quartered; those in the fortress received us with as great joy as if we had restored their lives to them, which they had already considered as lost; and we passed that day and the following night in extreme joy, believing that peace had again returned.

The next day, after mass, I sent a messenger to the town of Vera Cruz, to carry the good news that the Christians were alive, and that I had entered the city, which was quiet. The messenger returned in half an an hour after his departure, covered with bruises and injuries, crying aloud that all the Indians of the city were in arms, and that they had raised the bridges; and soon after an attack was made upon us by so great a multitude of people on all sides, that neither the streets nor the roofs of the houses were visible, on account of the crowd, from whom proceeded the most violent outcries and terrible shouts that could be conceived. Stones thrown by slings fell in such numbers upon the garrison that it seemed as if they came down like rain from the clouds; and darts and arrows were so thick that the houses and squares were filled with them, and almost

* June 24th, 1520.

prevented our walking about. I sallied forth at two or three different points, where they were engaged stoutly with our men; and at one time, when a captain had led forth 200 men, they fell upon them before he had time to form them in order, and killed four of their number, besides wounding the captain and several others. I was also wounded, and many of the Spaniards who were with me engaged in another quarter. We destroyed few of the enemy, because they took refuge beyond the bridges, and did us much injury from the roofs of houses and terraces, some of which fell into our possession and were burned. But they were so numerous and strong, and so well defended and supplied with stones and other arms, that our whole force was not sufficient to take them, nor to prevent the enemy from attacking us at their pleasure.

The attack on the fortress or garrison was made with such violence that they succeeded in setting fire to several parts of it, and a considerable portion of it was burned without our being able to prevent it, until we cut away the walls and levelled a portion of the building with the ground, by which we obstructed the progress of the fire, and extinguished it. And had it not been for the great caution that I used in posting musketeers, archers, and several pieces of artillery, they would have scaled our walls in broad daylight without our being able to resist them. Thus we fought all that day until the darkness of night enveloped us, and even then they continued to assail us with noises and alarms till daylight. That night I directed the breaches caused by the fire to be repaired, together with all other parts of the garrison that seemed to require it; and I arranged the quarters, determining who were to remain in them the next day, and

who were to be engaged without; at the same time I caused suitable care to be taken of the wounded, who amounted to more than eighty in number.

As soon as it was daylight, the enemy renewed the combat with still greater vigor than the day before, for the number of them was so immense that there was no need of levelling the guns, but only to direct them against the mass of Indians. And although the fire-arms did much injury, for we played off thirteen arquebuses besides matchlocks and crossbows, they produced so little impression that their effect scarcely seemed to be felt; since where a discharge cut down ten or twelve men, the ranks were instantly closed up by additional numbers, and no apparent loss was perceived. Leaving in the garrison a sufficient force for its defence, and as large as I could spare, I sallied forth with the rest, and took from the enemy several bridges, setting fire to a number of houses and destroying the people who defended them; but they were so numerous, that although we did them much injury, the effect was still imperceptible. Our men were compelled to fight all day long without cessation, while the enemy were relieved at intervals by fresh forces, and still had a superabundance of men. But we had none of our Spanish force killed on this day, although fifty or sixty were wounded, and we continued the contest till night, when we withdrew wearied into the garrison.

Seeing the great mischief done us by the enemy in wounding and slaying our people, while they were either unharmed, or if we caused them any loss, it was immediately repaired by their great numbers, we spent all that night and the next day in constructing three engines of timber, each of which would contain twenty men,

covered with thick plank to protect them from the stones that were thrown from the terraces of houses. The persons to be conveyed in the machines were musketeers and archers, together with others provided with spades, pickaxes, and bars of iron, to demolish the barricades erected in the streets, and pull down the houses. While we were building these machines, the enemy did not cease their attacks; and so resolute were they, that when we sallied forth from our quarters, they attempted to enter them, and we had trouble enough to resist their progress. Muteczuma, who was still a prisoner, (together with his son and many other persons of distinction, who had been secured at the beginning of operations,) now came forward and requested to be taken to the terrace of the garrison, that he might speak to the leaders of his people and induce them to discontinue the contest. I caused him to be taken up, and when he reached a battlement projecting from the fortress, and sought an opportunity to address the people who were fighting in that quarter, a stone thrown by some one of his own subjects struck him on the head with so much force that he died in three days after. I then gave his dead body to two Indians who were amongst the prisoners, and taking it upon their shoulders, they bore it away to his people; what afterwards became of it I know not. The war, however, did not cease, but increased in violence and desperation every day.

On the same day a cry was heard in the quarter where Muteczuma had been wounded, some of the enemy calling to me to approach there, as certain of their captains wished to confer with me. I accordingly did so, and we passed amongst them; when after a long parley I asked them to discontinue their attacks, since they had

no good reason for it, having received many benefits from me, and having always been treated well. Their answer was, that I must depart and leave the country, when the war would immediately cease; otherwise they were all resolved to die, or to destroy us. This they did, as it appeared, to induce me to leave the fortress, that they might cut us off at pleasure on our departure from the city, when we were between the bridges. I answered them that they need not suppose I asked for peace from fear, but that I was pained to be under the necessity of injuring them, and destroying so fine a city as theirs. They replied that they should not cease their attacks until I departed from the city.

After the engines were completed, immediately on the following day, I sallied forth to gain possession of certain terraces and bridges; and placing the engines in front they were followed by four pieces of artillery, with many bowmen and shield bearers, and more than three thousand native Tlascalans, who had come with me as auxiliaries, subordinate to the Spanish troops. Having reached a bridge, we brought the engines near to the walls of the terraces, together with scaling ladders, by means of which we ascended them. But the multitude of people was so great that defended the bridge and the terraces, and such showers of heavy stones were thrown from above, that the movements of the engines were disconcerted, and a Spaniard killed and many others wounded, without our being able to make any progress, although we struggled hard for it, and fought from morning till mid-day, when we returned sad enough to our quarters.

The enemy were so much encouraged by this unsuccessful movement on our part, that they advanced almost

to our doors, and took possession of the great temple, to the loftiest and most considerable tower of which nearly five hundred Indians, apparently persons of rank, ascended, taking with them a large supply of bread, water and other provisions, and a great quantity of stones. Most of them were armed with lances of large size, having points formed of flint, broader and not less sharp than ours; and from this position they did much mischief to the people in the garrison, as it was very near. The Spanish soldiers attacked this tower two or three times, and attempted to ascend it; but it was very lofty, and the passage up difficult on account of its having more than a hundred steps, and those above were well supplied with stones and other means of defence, and favored by our not having succeeded in gaining possession of the neighboring terraces; in consequence of these circumstances, every time our soldiers attempted the ascent, they came rolling down, many of them severely wounded, and the other portions of the enemy's force seeing this, took courage and penetrated to the very garrison without fear. Being sensible that if they continued their assaults while in possession of the tower, besides doing us much harm, they would be encouraged in the prosecution of the war, I sallied forth from the garrison, although lame in my left hand from a wound I had received in the engagement on the first day; and having tied a shield to my arm, I advanced to the tower, attended by a number of Spanish soldiers, and caused it to be surrounded at its base by a sufficient number of men, as was quite practicable. This precaution was not a useless one, as the troops stationed around the tower were attacked on all sides by the enemy, who increased in numbers to favor those within; in

the mean time I began to ascend the stairs, followed by certain Spaniards. While they who were above disputed the ascent with great courage, and even overturned three or four of my followers, by the aid of God and his glorious Mother, for whose house this tower had been designated, and whose image had been placed in it, we succeeded in ascending, and engaged with the enemy on the upper area, until I compelled them to leap down to a lower terrace that surrounded it, one pace in width. Of these terraces the tower had three or four, about sixteen feet one above the other. Some of the enemy fell to the very bottom, who, besides the injury received from the fall, were slain by the Spanish soldiers stationed around the base. Those who remained on the upper terraces fought so desperately that we were more than three hours engaged with them before they were all despatched; thus all perished, not one escaping. And your sacred Majesty may be assured, that so arduous was the attempt to take this tower, that if God had not broken their spirits, twenty of them would have been sufficient to resist the ascent of a thousand men, although they fought with the greatest valor, even unto death. I caused this tower and the others within the temple to be burned, from which they had removed the images we had placed in them.

The fierceness of the enemy was somewhat abated by the capture of this position; and while they relaxed their exertions throughout the city to a considerable degree, I directed my attention to the neighboring terrace, and called to the chiefs who had before conferred with me, but were now somewhat dismayed by what they had witnessed. They immediately appeared, when I said to them that they saw their inability to maintain their

ground; that we should every day do them much injury, destroy many lives, burn and lay waste the city; and that we should persevere until nothing was left of it or them. They answered, that they were well aware much harm would befal them, and that many of them would lose their lives; but that they were still determined to make an end of us, even if they should all perish in the attempt; that I might see how the streets, public squares and terraces were filled with people, who were so numerous that they had made a calculation that if twenty-five thousand of them should fall to one of ours, we would be first exterminated, so small was our number compared with theirs; that all the causeways leading into the city had been destroyed, (which was so far true that only one of them remained,) and thus we had no way of escape but by water; that they knew well we had few provisions and but little fresh water, and that ere long we should perish with hunger, even if they did not kill us. They were, indeed, quite right, in saying that had we nothing else to contend with, hunger and want would soon put an end to our lives. We exchanged many other words, each party sustaining his own side. As soon as it was dark, I sallied forth with a number of Spaniards, and as I found the people were taken by surprise, we obtained possession of one street, in which we burned more than three hundred houses. While the enemy were assembling in that quarter in its defence, I speedily turned into another street, where I also burned several houses, especially certain terraces that adjoined our quarters, from which we had experienced much annoyance. Thus the events of that night struck great terror into the enemy; and during the same night I caused the engines that had created confusion in our

ranks the day before, to be repaired and got in readiness.

In order to follow up the victory God had granted us, I sallied forth at break of day into the same street where they had routed us the day before, and I found the enemy not less prepared for defence than they were on the former occasion. But as our lives and honor were now at stake, and as that street led to a causeway that remained unbroken,* extending to the main land, although interrupted by eight bridges very large and high, and the street itself was filled with lofty terraces and towers; we put forth so much resolution and spirit, that, with the aid of our Lord, we secured that day four of the bridges, and burned all of the terraces, houses and towers, as far as the last of these bridges. They had erected during the previous night, on all the bridges, many strong breastworks of unburnt bricks and clay, so that neither the guns nor the crossbows made any impression on them. We filled up the space occupied by the four bridges with the unburnt bricks and the earth from the breastworks, together with a great quantity of stones and timber from the burnt houses, although this was not effected without danger, and many Spaniards were wounded. The same night I used much precaution in guarding the bridges, lest the enemy should succeed in recovering them.

The next day in the morning, I made another sally from our quarters, and God gave us again success and victory, although the enemy appeared in great numbers, and defended the bridges, protected by strong entrenchments and ditches which they had formed during the

*This is the street to Tacuba, now a village on solid ground, which was then covered entirely by the lakes.

night; we took them all, and covered them up; and some of our horsemen followed at the heels of the fugitives in the heat of victory, and pursued them to the main land. While I was employed in repairing the bridges and filling them up, messengers came to me in great haste, reporting that the enemy had attacked the garrison, and at the same time had sued for peace, several of their leaders being in waiting to see me. I immediately went with two horsemen to see what they wanted. These men assured me that if I would engage not to punish them for what they had done, they would raise the blockade, replace the bridges that had been destroyed, and restore the causeways, and that hereafter they would serve your Majesty as they had before done. They also requested that I would bring them a priest of theirs whom I had taken prisoner, who was, as it were, the commander-in-chief of their religion. He came and addressed them, and brought about an arrangement between me and them; and it appeared that they immediately despatched messengers to inform the captains and the people who were in the camp, that the attacks on the garrison and all other offensive operations should cease. Upon this being done we took leave of them, and I went to the garrison to procure some food.

While I was beginning to take some refreshment, information was brought me in great haste, that the Indians had attacked the bridges which we had taken the same day, and had killed certain Spaniards. God only knows with what feelings I received this intelligence, since I had thought that we had nothing more to trouble us after having gained the possession of the avenue leading out of the city. I mounted in the greatest possible haste, and galloped the whole length of the street,

followed by a few horsemen; and without stopping a moment I dashed in amongst the Indians, put them to flight whilst I regained the bridges, and pursued them to the main land. As the infantry were wearied, wounded and panic-struck, they did not follow me, and I saw the dangerous situation in which I was placed from being unsupported by them. On this account after having passed the bridges, when I sought to return I found them in possession of the enemy, and sunk to a great depth where we had filled them up; and both sides of the causeway were covered with people, on the land and water, who galled us with stones and arrows to such a degree, that if God had not been pleased to interpose mysteriously in our behalf, it would have been impossible for us to escape thence; and, indeed, it was rumored amongst the people in the city that I was dead. When I reached the last bridge next the city, I found all the cavalry that had accompanied me fallen in, and one horse without a rider; and as in this situation I could not pass, I rushed alone against the enemy, and thus opened a passage by which the horsemen could extricate themselves. After this I found the bridge free, and passed over, although with some trouble, as I had to leap my horse, in one place, nearly six feet from one side to the other; but as I and my horse were well protected by armor, the enemy did us no harm more than to cause our bodies a little pain.

Thus the enemy that night came off victorious, having regained possession of four of the bridges. The other four I left well guarded, and returned to the garrison, where I constructed a bridge of timber that could be carried by forty men. Seeing the dangerous situation in which we were now placed, and the very serious injury that the Indians were doing us every day; and fearing

that they would also destroy the remaining causeway, as they had done the others, and when that was effected death would be our inevitable fate; and moreover, having been often entreated by all my companions to abandon the place, the greater part of whom were so badly wounded as to be disabled from fighting, I determined to quit the city that night. I took all the gold and jewels belonging to your Majesty that could be removed, and placed them in one apartment, where I delivered it in parcels to the officers of your Highness, whom I had designated for this purpose in the royal name; and I begged and desired the alcaldes, regidores, and all the people, to aid me in removing and preserving this treasure; I gave up my mare to carry as much as she could bear; and I selected certain Spaniards, as well my own servants as others, to accompany the gold and the mare, and the rest the magistrates above mentioned and myself distributed amongst the Spaniards, to be borne by them. Abandoning the garrison, together with much wealth belonging to your Highness, the Spaniards and myself, I went forth as secretly as possible, taking with me a son and two daughters of Muteczuma and Cacamacin, cacique of Aculuacan, with his brother, whom I had appointed in his place, and several other governors of provinces and cities that I had taken prisoners.

Arriving at the bridges, (now broken up,) which the Indians had left, the bridge that I carried was thrown over where the first of them had been, without much difficulty, as there was none to offer resistance, except some watchmen who were stationed there, and who uttered so loud cries that before we had arrived at the second an immense multitude of the enemy assailed us, fighting in every direction, both by land and water.

I sallied across with great speed, followed by five horsemen and a hundred foot, with whom I passed all the (broken) bridges swimming, and reached the main land. Leaving the people who formed this advance party, I returned to the rear, where I found the troops hotly engaged; it is incalculable how much our people suffered, as well Spaniards as our Indian allies of Tascaltecal, nearly all of whom perished, together with many native Spaniards and horses, besides the loss of the gold, jewels, cotton cloth, and many other things we had brought away, including the artillery. Having collected all that were alive, I sent them on before, while with three or four horse and about twenty foot that dared to remain with me, I followed in the rear, incessantly engaged with the Indians, until we at length reached a city called Tacuba, [Tlacopan,] beyond the causeway, after encountering a degree of toil and danger, the extent of which God only knows. As often as I turned against the enemy, I met a shower of arrows and darts and stones, and there being water on both sides, they assailed us without exposing themselves, and without fear; for when we attacked them on the causeway, they immediately leapt into the water, receiving little hurt, except some few, who, when the multitude was so great as to trample upon one another, fell and perished. Thus with great labor and fatigue I brought off all this portion of our force without any of the Spaniards or Indians being wounded or slain, except one of the horse that had gone with me to the rear, where they fought with no less fury than in front or on the flanks, although the hottest part of the fight was in the extreme rear, where our men were constantly exposed to fresh attacks from the inhabitants of the city.

Having reached the city of Tacuba, I found all our people gathered together in the square, not knowing where to go; I gave immediate directions to march into the country, before the inhabitants should collect in greater numbers in the city, and that they should take possession of the terraces, as the enemy would be likely to do us much injury from them. Those who had led the van saying, that they knew not in which direction to leave the city, I bade them remain with the rear, while I took command of the van until I had led them out into the open fields, where I waited till the rest came up. When the rear arrived, I saw that they had suffered some loss, and that some of the Spaniards and Indians had fallen, and that they had left on the road much gold which the Indians had seized. I remained there until all our people had arrived, closely pursued by the enemy. I kept the enemy at bay until the infantry had taken possession of a hill on which there was a tower with a strong building, which they took without suffering any loss, and I maintained my position, not suffering the enemy to advance, until the hill was taken;* and God only knows the toil and fatigue with which it was accomplished; for of twenty-four horses that remained to us, there was not one that could move briskly, nor a horseman able to raise his arm, nor a foot soldier unhurt who could make any effort. When we had reached the building, we fortified ourselves in it; and the enemy invested it, remaining till night without allowing us an hour of rest.

In this defeat it was ascertained that one hundred and fifty Spaniards lost their lives, together with forty-five

* Called the hill of Muteczuma, on which is now the celebrated sanctuary of Our Lady de los Remedios.—L. (See Madame Calderon's Life in Mexico, vol. 1, p. 226.)

mares and horses, and more than two thousand Indians, our auxiliaries; amongst the latter were the son and daughters of Muteczuma, and the other caciques whom we had taken prisoners. The same night* about midnight, thinking that we were not perceived, we sallied forth from the building very secretly, leaving in it many lighted fires, without knowing our route, nor where to go, except that one of the Tascaltecal† Indians who guided us, promised to lead us to his country, if the enemy did not embarrass the route. But guards had been stationed around who noticed our movements, and gave the alarm to the multitudes of people dwelling in that vicinity, of whom great numbers were collected, who pursued us until day-light, when five horsemen who went before as runners attacked some squadrons of people on the road, and killed a number of them; these fled, supposing that there was a greater number of horse and foot than appeared. When I saw that the number of the enemy was increasing on all sides, I made a disposition of our force, and out of those remaining unhurt I formed squadrons, and placed them in front and rear, and on the flanks; I put the wounded in the centre; and I also arranged the position of the horse. During the whole of that day we were engaged in fighting in every direction, so that during the whole night and day we did not advance more than three leagues. It pleased our Lord when the night came to show us a tower and a good house on a hill, where we entrenched ourselves; and that night the ene- left us undisturbed, except that near the dawn of day there was a sudden alarm that only sprung from the

* This is still called *la noche triste*, the sorrowful night.

† It might better have been supposed to be a guardian angel, either St. Peter, as some have imagined, or St. James the Apostle, as in the battle of las Navas de Tolosa, in the form of a shepherd.—L.

constant apprehension we all had of the multitude of people that was continually at our heels.

The next day I set out at one o'clock in the order referred to, watching with great caution my front and rear, and the enemy constantly followed us on both sides of our route, uttering loud cries and calling upon the people of all that region, which is very populous. Our cavalry, although few in number, attacked them, but did them little harm, since, as the country was rough and uneven, they betook themselves to the hills for refuge. In this manner we marched that day around several lakes,* until we arrived at a populous place where we expected to have a collision with the people of the town; but when we reached it, we found it deserted, and the people fled to other places in the neighborhood. I remained there that day and the next, as our people, both the wounded and those unhurt, were extremely wearied and exhausted with hunger and thirst; and the horses were also in the same condition; we found there a quantity of maize, which we eat, and took supplies of it, both boiled and roasted, for our march. The next day we resumed our route, still pursued by the enemy, who annoyed us in front and rear, uttering loud cries and making slight attacks on the way. We continued our course, following the guidance of the Indian of Tascaltecal; in the course of which we were compelled to endure much toil and fatigue, as we often lost our way; and it was already evening when we arrived at a plain where were several small houses, in which we lodged with little enough to eat. The next day we resumed our march, starting at an early hour of the morning, with the enemy still hanging pon our rear; after some skirmishing, we arrived at a

* These small lakes are Zumpango, Jaltocan, and San Cristobal.—L.

considerable town two leagues distant, on the right of which there were a number of Indians, posted on the summit of a small hill. Thinking to take them prisoners, as they were very near the road, and also to discover if there were any more people behind the hill, I proceeded with five horse and ten or twelve foot to attack them. We discovered that in the rear of the hill there was a large city with many inhabitants, with whom we engaged, until finding the ground somewhat rough and rocky, and the enemy numerous, while our own force was small, we were compelled to fall back on the town, where the army was left encamped. On this occasion I was badly wounded in the head by two stones; and after my wounds had been dressed, I gave orders to leave the place, as it did not appear to be a safe position. Resuming our route, we were still followed by Indians in considerable numbers, who attacked our troops with such vigor as to wound four or five Spaniards, and as many horses; one horse was killed, and God only knows how great a loss it was to us, and how much sorrow his death occasioned in our ranks, as next to God our greatest security was in our horses. We derived some consolation from the flesh of this animal, which we eat, not leaving even his skin, or any other part of him, so great were our necessities; for since our departure from the great city we had eaten nothing but maize, boiled and roasted; and even this we were not always fully supplied with, being compelled to subsist in part on wild plants.

Seeing that every day the enemy increased in numbers and vigor, while we were becoming enfeebled, I that night caused the wounded and infirm, whom we had so far carried on the backs and shoulders of the horses, to provide themselves with crutches and other means of assistance,

so that they might be able to have support in walking, and the horses and Spanish soldiers be left free to fight the enemy. And it seemed as if the Holy Ghost had enlightened my mind to adopt this precaution, from what occurred on the following day ;* since, having left our quarters in the morning, and advanced a league and a half on our way, we encountered so great a multitude of Indians that they completely covered the ground in front and rear, and on our flanks, not leaving a single spot unoccupied. They attacked us with such violence on all sides, that they became mingled with our own people, and it was difficult for us to distinguish them from our allies. We thought it certain that our last day was come, so great was the force of the enemy and so feeble our own, exhausted as we were by fatigue, and reduced by hunger, and nearly all of us suffering from wounds. But it pleased the Lord to show his great power and mercy towards us, so that we were enabled to humble the pride and arrogance of our enemies, great numbers of whom perished, including some of their most distinguished men and principal leaders; for the multitude of them was so great that they were in each other's way, and unable either to fight or to fly. We were engaged during the greater part of the day, until it pleased God that one should fall who must have been a leading personage amongst them, as at his death the battle ceased. After this we were somewhat relieved, although still suffering from hunger, until we reached a small house on a plain, in which and the fields we lodged that night. From this

* This is right, as God alone could have performed such miracles; and this ought to cover with confusion those who detract from the merit of the conquest. Cortes was another Moses when he said, "The Lord will fight for us;" Exod. 14.—L. The reader will not, we hope, be displeased by these characteristic expressions of the pious archbishop.

spot were descried certain mountains of the province of Tascaltecal,* which produced not a little joy in our hearts; since we recognized the land and knew it was the country where we were going. We were, however, not sure of finding the inhabitants of that province secure and friendly; thinking it possible that on seeing us so reduced, they might desire to put an end to our lives, in order to recover the liberty they had before enjoyed. This idea with our suspicions gave us as much uneasiness as we should have felt in renewing our contests with the Culuans.

The following day, as soon as it was light, we resumed our march over a very level road, which led directly to the province of Tascaltecal; a few only of the enemy followed us, although the country around was very populous, and we were still saluted with a hooting noise from the hills at some distance in our rear. On that day, which was Saturday, the 8th of July, [1520,] we passed out of the territory of Culua, and entered that of the province of Tascaltecal, at a place called Gualipan,† containing three or four thousand families, where we were well received by the inhabitants, and somewhat refreshed with food and rest, although compelled to pay for the provisions they supplied us with, and they would take nothing but gold in payment, which in our great necessities we were forced to give. I remained in that town three days, during which time Magiscacin and Sicutengal, together with all the other nobles of that province, and some from Guazucingo, came to see and confer

* The villages and fields where these battles were fought were before arriving at Puebla, and between Otumba and that city; and there can be seen the Sierra of Tlascala.—L.

† Hueyotlipan, in the seignory or republic of Tlascala.—L.

with us; all of whom discovered much grief at what had befallen us, and endeavored to console me,* saying that they had often told me the people of Culua were traitors, and that I should be on my guard against them, not trusting their professions; that I ought to rejoice in having escaped with life; and that they would assist me to the death in obtaining satisfaction for the wrongs we had suffered; to this course they said they were impelled not only by their allegiance to your Highness, but also from grief for the loss of many sons and brothers who had perished in my service, and from a sense of many other injuries that they had suffered from the same quarter in times past; and they assured me that I might rely on their proving sure and fast friends to me until death. They added, that since I had returned wounded, and all my company were worn down with toil, we should go to a city four leagues from this town, where we might obtain repose, and they would strive to cure our wounds and recover us from the effects of our fatigue and exhaustion.

I expressed myself pleased with their offer and accepted it, making them presents of some little jewels that we had saved, with which they were well satisfied; and I accompanied them to the city, where we found a good reception. Magiscacin brought me a bed encased in wood, together with some cotton cloth for me to sleep on, as we had brought none, and he did all in his power with the means he possessed to repair all our losses. I had left in this city, when on my march to Temixtitan, several sick persons and some of my servants, with silver, cotton clothing, and other domestic articles, including provisions,

* This proof of fidelity and a sense of honor in these states is worthy of praise, especially considering the situation of Cortes, himself wounded, his men discomfited, poor, and perishing with hunger.—L.

(which I then had with me,) in order to be less encumbered on my march, if any obstacles should present themselves, and my papers, including the treaties that I had made with the natives of these parts, should be lost; I had left also the clothing of the Spaniards who accompanied me except what they required for use, together with their bedding. I was informed that another servant of mine had come to this place from the town of Vera Cruz, who brought provisions and other things for me, attended by five horse, and forty-five foot, and had taken away the persons I had left there, together with all the silver, clothing, and other things, both belonging to me and my companions, including 70,000 pesos of molten gold, which I had left there in two chests, besides other jewels, and more than 14,000 pesos of gold in pieces, which had been presented to a certain captain in the province of Tuchitebequa, whom I had sent to establish the town of Cuacucalco, together with many other things, of the value of more than 30,000 pesos of gold; and that the Indians of Culua had killed them all on the road, and taken away their treasures. I was also informed that many other Spaniards had been destroyed by the same people, while on their way to the city of Temixtitan, supposing that I was in peaceable possession of the city, and that the roads were secure, as I had before found them. On the receipt of this intelligence I assure your Majesty that we were all filled with sorrow, as great as can be conceived; since besides the loss of the Spaniards and of the treasure, it brought fresh to our minds the death and loss of those of our countrymen who had perished in the city at the bridges and on the road; and especially it excited our suspicions as to the fate of the people left in the town of Vera Cruz, lest the peo-

ple who had been friendly, on hearing of our discomfiture, had broken into rebellion. In order to ascertain the truth, I forthwith despatched messengers, accompanied by Indians as guides, to whom I gave directions to avoid the beaten road until they arrived at Vera Cruz, and that they should inform me as soon as possible of the state of things there. It pleased our Lord that they should find the Spaniards well and the natives very quiet in that place. This intelligence made full amends for our losses and troubles; although to our people there the news of what had befallen us and our overthrow was very painful.

I remained in this province of Tascaltecal twenty days, for the purpose of healing my wounds,* which had grown much worse, especially the wound on my head, from want of attention on our march; and likewise to heal the wounded of my company, some of whom, however, died in consequence both of their wounds and excessive fatigue; others remained maimed and lame, from the severity of their wounds, and the want of proper attention. I myself lost two fingers from my left hand.

* Cortes was wounded severely in the head, leg, and hand.—L.

CHAPTER VIII.

My companions—many of whom having perished, and those who survived being broken in spirits, wounded, and disheartened by dangers and the toils they had endured, as well as the prospect of those yet to come, which seemed to be near at hand—often begged me to proceed to Vera Cruz, where we should have some strength, before the natives, now our friends, should discover our reduced condition and weakness, and confederate with our enemies to deprive us of the ports from which we might depart, attacking us on one side, and the people of Vera Cruz on the other; while if both our parties were united, having ships too at our command, we should be stronger, and better able to defend ourselves in case they should attack us, while we sent to the islands for aid. But seeing that to exhibit to the natives, especially to our friends, a want of courage, would be a more speedy motive for them to abandon us and take sides against us; feeling also assured that fortune always favors the brave, and reflecting that we were Christians, trusting in the mercy and goodness of God, who would not suffer us to lose utterly so great and noble a land, that had submitted to your Majesty, and was on the point of being tranquillized; and being unwilling to relinquish the performance of so great a service as would be rendered by continuing the war until the country was again restored to its former peaceful condition—I determined by no means to go down to the ports on the seaboard, preferring to encounter every toil

and danger that could possibly lie in our way. I said to them that I would not abandon this land; for that it appeared to me not only disgraceful to myself and dangerous to all, but as rank treason to your Majesty; and that I was resolved to turn again in pursuit of the enemy wherever I could find him, and assail him by every means in my power.

Accordingly, after having been twenty days in this province, although not yet cured of my wounds, and my companions being still languid, I departed from it, and entered another called Tepeaca, which was in alliance with our enemies of Culua. I had received information of ten or twelve Spaniards having been killed in this province while on their way from Vera Cruz to the great city, the road leading through it. The province of Tepeaca has a common boundary with Tascaltecal and Chururtecal, being of wide extent. As we entered the province, a large number of its people sallied forth to meet us, and vigorously fighting defended the passage as much as was in their power, taking their stations in strong and well fortified buildings. But not to enter into particulars of what occurred during this campaign, to avoid prolixity, I will only say, that after having required of them to render obedience to the commands of your Majesty, as the only terms on which peace could be preserved, they refused, and we made war upon them, meeting them in several battles. By the aid of God, and the royal success of your Highness, we constantly defeated them with great slaughter, while throughout the whole war they neither killed nor wounded a single Spaniard. Although, as I have already stated, this province is of great extent, in twenty days I reduced many towns and a large population into subjection. Its nobles

and leading men have yielded themselves vassals to your Majesty; and I have besides driven out of it many Culuans who had come to aid the people in making war against us, and to prevent them from becoming our friends, either by force or consent. I have encountered, however, some obstacles in conducting this war, and even now it is not finished, since there are some towns and people left to be reduced, which with the aid of our Lord will soon become like the others, subject to the royal dominion of your Majesty.

In a certain part of this province, where the ten Spaniards were killed, as the people are constantly committing hostilities and are very rebellious, yielding to force of arms only, I made a number of slaves, the fifth of whom was assigned to the magistrates of your Highness. Besides having murdered the Spaniards and rebelled against your Majesty, these people eat human flesh, a fact so notorious that I have not taken the trouble to send your Majesty any proof of it. I was also led to make slaves of these people in order to strike terror into the Culuans; and because there are so many of that kind of people, that if I do not inflict a heavy and severe punishment upon them they will not reform. In this war we were assisted by the natives of the provinces of Tascaltecal, Churultecal, and Guasuzingo, where a confirmed friendship exists with us, and we have good reason to believe that they will always prove loyal vassals to your Majesty.

While I was in the province of Tepeaca carrying on this war, I received letters from Vera Cruz, informing me that two ships of Francisco de Garay had arrived at that port in distress; that as it appeared, he had sent more people to the great river of which I gave an account

to your Highness, and the natives had attacked them, killing seventeen or eighteen Christians and wounding many more. They had also killed seven horses; and the Spaniards who survived had swam to their ships, having made their escape by being fleet of foot; and the captain and all the rest had arrived disheartened and wounded, who were well received by the officer I had left in command of the town, and had every attention paid to their wounds; but in order that they might have a better opportunity of recovering, he had sent a part of them to the abode of a cacique, a friend of ours, in that neighborhood, where they were well taken care of. All this sad intelligence affected us in a similar manner with our own past sufferings; and probably this trouble would not have befallen them, had they come to me on a former occasion, as I have already given your Majesty an account. For, as I was well informed of every thing in that part of the country, they would have received such advice from me as to have prevented what has occurred; especially as the lord of that river and land, which is called Panuco, had enrolled himself as one of your Majesty's vassals, in token of which he had sent to me at Temixtitan certain things by his messengers, as I have related. I have written to Vera Cruz, that if the captain of Francisco de Garay and his people wish to depart, to give them an opportunity, and afford them and their ships in getting away every possible assistance.

After having reduced to subjection all that part of the province of Tepeaca which is still held in quiet allegiance to your Highness, the officials of your Majesty and myself consulted much as to the proper mode of governing it so as to promote the security of the province.

Seeing that the natives of it, after acknowledging themselves your Majesty's vassals, had rebelled and put to death the Spaniards, and that they are situated on the road and pass by which all intercourse is carried on between the seaports and the interior; and considering that if this province should be left to itself, as before, the natives of the country and seigniory of Culua, which adjoins them, would strive to seduce and draw them again into rebellion and insurrection, from which great mischief would result, and great obstacles to the security of these parts and the service of your Majesty, that would put an end to the intercourse above mentioned; especially since on the road to the seacoast there are two mountain passes which are rough and unsafe, lying within this province, and easily defended by the inhabitants; and as on this account, as well as for other reasons and causes of great importance, it appeared to us that in order to avoid these evils there ought to be in this province of Tepeaca a town, situated in a favorable location, possessing the necessary qualities for the convenience of its inhabitants; I, for the purpose of carrying this design into effect, in the name of your Majesty, gave to the proposed town the name of Segura de la Frontera,* and appointed the alcaldes, regidores and other officials, conformably to the usual custom. And for the better security of the citizens of this town in the place marked out by me, the materials were at once begun to be collected for building a fort, which exist here of a good quality, and the greatest possible despatch was used in the work.

While engaged in writing this relation,† there came to

* This place does not now retain the name of Segura, but the old one of Tepeaca.—L.

† This letter of Cortes was written at Segura de la Frontera, at least the latter part of it, as it is dated there.—L.

me several messengers from the lord of a city five leagues distant from this province, called Guacahula,* situated at the entrance of a mountain pass, which is on the route from thence to Mexico, who on behalf of that lord said to me, that several days since they would have come to me to render your Majesty the obedience they owed, and to offer themselves as vassals; that I must not blame them by supposing that the failure was with their consent; but they would inform me that several Culuan chiefs were lodged in their city; and in it and a league from it there were thirty thousand men in garrison,† guarding that pass to prevent our going through it, and also to prevent the inhabitants of the city and the neighboring provinces from serving your Highness, or being our friends. That they would have come to offer their loyal service if those people had not hindered, and they gave me this information that I might devise a remedy; since, besides the obstacles thrown in the way of their wishes, the citizens and all the neighboring people were greatly injured by this state of things; and as there were many armed men collected, the people were aggrieved and ill-treated by them, being deprived of their women, farms, &c.; and I might see they were ready to do whatever I directed, if I only afforded them protection.

Immediately after having thanked them for their information and offers, I gave them thirteen horse and two hundred foot, to go with them, together with about thirty thousand of our Indian allies. The plan was to make the attack by surprise, and that when they approached the city, the lord and the natives, and the rest of his vassals and supporters, should be in readiness and surround the quarters in which the officers were lodged,

* Huaquechula—a republic.—L. † These were Culuan or Mexican troops.

and seize and kill them before the troops could come to their relief; and that when the latter should come, the Spaniards were to be already in the city, and prepared to fight and put them to route. When they had gone, and the Spaniards with them, they all proceeded to the city of Churultecal, and through some part of the province of Guasucingo, bordering upon the territory of Guacachula, within four leagues of it; and it is said the Spaniards were told in a town of the province of Guasucingo, that the inhabitants of that province were leagued with those of Guacachula and Culua, to draw by this artifice the Spaniards into that city, that they might attack them with united forces and destroy them. And as the fear excited by the Culuans in their city and country had not wholly left our men, this information spread consternation among the Spaniards; and the commander I had sent with them made an examination according to the best of his judgment, when they arrested all the chiefs of Guasucingo that were with them, and the messengers from the city of Guacachula, and returned with them as prisoners to the city of Churultecal, four leagues from that place; and from thence they sent to me all the prisoners, attended by several horse and foot, with the evidence they had of their plans. The captain also wrote me that our men were alarmed, as it appeared to them the affair would be one of great difficulty. As soon as the prisoners had arrived, I spoke to them by interpreters, and having used the greatest diligence to ascertain the truth, it seemed to me that the captain had misunderstood them. I therefore caused them to be set at liberty, and satisfied them that I fully believed them to be loyal vassals of your sacred Majesty, and that I would go in person to rout the Culuans; and in order to exhibit

no weakness or fear to the natives of the country, as well friends as enemies, it seemed to me necessary that the enterprise which had been commenced should not be abandoned. That I might relieve the Spaniards of their fears, I determined to lay aside business and the writing of my despatch to your Majesty, in which I was engaged, and immediately set out, in the greatest possible haste, and arrived the same day at the city of Churultecal, eight leagues from this place, where I found the Spaniards, who all declared that there was no doubt of the treason.

The next day I went to sleep at the town of Guasucingo, where the chiefs had been arrested. The day following, after having arranged matters with the messengers of Guacachula at what points we should enter the city, I set out for it one hour before day-break, and arrived near it at about ten o'clock. When half a league distant, there came along the road certain messengers from the city, and informed me that every thing had been provided and was in readiness, and that the Culuans knew nothing of our coming, as the spies they had placed on the road had been taken by the natives of the city; and that they had also taken others whom the Culuan commanders had sent to visit the enclosures and towers of the city, that they might survey the field; and thus the enemy were all quite off their guard, supposing that they were sufficiently protected from surprise by their sentinels and scouts; so that my arrival would not be perceived. Thus I made great haste in going to the city without being discovered, although I had to pass over a plain from which they might easily see us. Accordingly it appeared that we were discovered by our friends in the city, as we were so near, who immediately

ran to the quarters of the Culuan captains, and began to attack the others scattered about the city. When I had arrived within arrow-shot of the city, they had already made about forty prisoners, and I hastened to enter it. A very loud noise was heard throughout the streets of the place, which arose from the combat going on. Guided by a native of the city, I reached the quarters of the captains, which I found surrounded by more than three thousand men, fighting to enter the door. They had taken the upper stories and the terraces, but the captains and those with them fought so stoutly and vigorously, that the assailants could not force an entrance, although the former were few in number; because, besides the valor with which they fought, the building itself was very strong. As soon as I arrived, we entered, and so many of the citizens rushed in that I could not prevent the immediate death of the captains; for I wished to save the lives of some of them in order to obtain information of the affairs of the great city, and who had succeeded Muteczuma after his death, &c. I rescued only one, more dead than alive, from whom I learned what I shall hereafter relate.

Throughout the city they killed many Culuans who were quartered there; and those who were alive when I entered the place, knowing my arrival, began to fly towards the garrison, many of whom perished in the act of escaping. The tumult was quickly heard and understood by those in the garrison, as it occupied a lofty situation, commanding the whole city and the adjacent plain, so that almost at the same moment those who had fled from the city, and the people who had come to its relief, and to see what was taking place, met—of whom there were more than thirty thousand men, the most showy people

we had yet seen, for they wore jewels of gold, silver, and feathers; and as the city is large, they began to set fire to it at the quarter where they entered; this soon came to the knowledge of the natives, and I sallied forth with only the horse, as the foot were very much fatigued. We rushed upon them, when they drew back into a narrow pass, which we entered, following in their rear, and pursued them up a very rugged declivity; so that when we had reached the top of the elevation, neither the enemy nor ourselves were able to advance or retreat. Many of them fell down dead there from the effects of the heat, without any wounds; and two horses were unable to move, and some died. We did them much injury. Many of our Indian allies came to our assistance, and being fresh, while the enemy were almost dead, they despatched many of them. In this manner the field was soon cleared of those that survived, although somewhat covered with the dead; and we reached the barracks they had newly built in the fields, which were divided into three parts, each of which seemed a good sized village; since besides the soldiers they had large retinues of servants and extensive supplies for their camp; and I afterwards learned that there were many persons of distinction among them. The whole was despoiled and consumed by the Indians, our allies, of whom I assure your Majesty there were assembled more than one hundred thousand men.* Having by this victory driven the enemy out of the country, pursuing them until they had passed certain bridges and narrow defiles, we returned to the city, where we were well received and quartered by the inhabitants;

*On account of these acts of the people of Huaquechula, many privileges were granted them, which they retain to this day.—L.

and we rested three days in that city, having great need of repose.

At this time there came to submit themselves to the royal service of your Majesty the numerous population inhabiting the mountainous country, situated two leagues from the place where the enemy had pitched their camp, and at the foot of the mountain from which, as I have mentioned, smoke issues; this people are called Ocupatuyo.* They stated that their cacique had gone away with the Culuans at the time when we pursued them, supposing that we should not stop short of his town; that they had for many days desired my friendship, and would have come to acknowledge themselves vassals of your Majesty, but that the cacique would not permit them, not desiring it himself, although they had often requested him to allow it. That they now wished to serve your Highness; and that there was left a brother of the cacique who had always been of their opinion in this matter, and still was so. They therefore requested that he might succeed to the government of the district; and that although the other should return, I should not consent to his being received as cacique, and that they should not so receive him. I answered them, that as they had been until now of the Culuan league and party, and rebels against the service of your Majesty, they deserved a severe punishment, which I had thought of executing on their persons and estates; but that since they had come forward and declared the cause of their rebellion and insurrection was the cacique who governed them, that I, in the name of your Majesty, pardoned their past errors, and received and admitted them into the royal service; but as soon as I should discover that they

* Ocuituco, which is at the base of the volcano —L.

had again erred, they should be surely punished. I added, that if they proved to be loyal subjects of your Highness, they would receive favor and assistance at my hands in the royal name; and they promised accordingly.

This city of Guacachula is situated on a plain, bounded on one side by a range of lofty and precipitous mountains; the other sides are bordered by two streams, running through large and deep ravines, two bow-shots distant from one another. The avenues to the city are few in number, and extremely difficult both in the ascent and descent, so that they can hardly be passed on horseback. The whole city is surrounded by a wall of great strength, built of stone and lime, more than twenty feet in height on the outside, and almost even with the ground on the inside. Along the wall there is erected a breastwork or battlement nearly three feet high, to protect them in fighting; and there are four entrances, so broad that one can pass through on horseback. At each entrance there are three or four bends in the extremities of the wall, doubling over one another; and each of these bends of the wall has its breastwork on it for fighting. Throughout the whole circuit of the walls there are heaps of stones, large and small, and of all shapes, for use in combat. The city contains five or six thousand families, and there are as many more in the villages subject to it. The situation is uncommonly fine, and within the city are numerous gardens, filled as usual with fruits and sweet scented herbs.*

After having reposed three or four days in this city,

* Clavigero says, "Quauhquechallan is called by the Spaniards Guaqueechula, or *Huacachula*. At present it is a pleasant Indian village, abounding with good fruit."

we proceeded to another city, called Izucan, four leagues from Guacachula; for I was informed that there had also been a large number of Culuans in garrison at that place, to whom the city, and several towns and villages adjacent to it, were tributary; and the inhabitants were represented as very friendly to the Culuans, on account of its cacique being a native of Culua, and even a relative of Muteczuma. In my progress thither I was accompanied by so great a multitude of natives, vassals of your Majesty, that they almost covered the fields and hills as far as we could see; and in truth, there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand men. We arrived over against the city of Izucan at ten o'clock; all the women and feeble persons had been removed from it, but there remained five or six thousand warriors, well equipped. When we had come in front of the place, they attempted to defend it; but the attempt was soon abandoned, when it was discovered that we had been guided to that side of the city where the entrance was the least difficult. We pursued the enemy through the town, forcing them to leap from the top of the walls, and cross the river that almost encircles the place in its course. They destroyed the bridges in their flight, which circumstance delayed us somewhat in crossing, but we continued the pursuit for a league and a half, and I think few of them escaped who had remained in the city.

On returning to the place, I sent two of its inhabitants, who had been made prisoners, to the principal persons, desiring them to return to the city, for the cacique had departed with the Culuans who had occupied the garrison; and I promised them in your Majesty's name, that if they became loyal vassals to your Highness, they would henceforth be well treated, and their rebellion and

past offences pardoned. The messenger went, and in three days from that time some of the principal citizens came and asked pardon for their error, declaring that they had been unable to avoid doing what they had done, as they were compelled to obey the commands of their lord; and they promised that henceforth, as their lord had gone away and abandoned them, they would truly and loyally serve your Majesty. I assured them of their safety, and bade them return to their houses, and bring back their women and children, who had been carried to other places and towns in alliance with the Culuans; and I directed them to tell the natives of those places to come to me, and I would overlook the past; and that they must not compel me to march against them, as they would suffer great injury, and it would be extremely painful for me to inflict it on them.

Accordingly in two days after the inhabitants of Izucan returned to their homes, and all the people subject to them came to acknowledge themselves the vassals of your Highness; and so all that province remained secure and steady in its allegiance as our allies and those of the people of Guacachula. A question arose as to whom appertained the government of the city and province of Izucan in the absence of the cacique, who had gone to Mexico. It appeared that there had been some controversy and party division between a natural son of the native lord of the country who had been put to death by Muteczuma, (the former being now in possession of the office, and married to his niece,) and on the other side a grandson of the native lord, a son of his legitimate daughter, the wife of the lord of Guacachula, whose son was thus the grandson of the native lord of Izucan. It was now agreed amongst them that this son

of the lord of Guacachula, descended in a legitimate line from the old caciques of the province, should inherit the government; since the other claimant being an illegitimate son was not entitled to the heirship. Homage was accordingly rendered in my presence to Muchacho, (the name of the young prince,) then about ten years of age; and because he was too young to administer the government, his illegitimate uncle and three other principal citizens, one from the city of Guacachula, and the two others of Izucan, were appointed regents, who were also entrusted with the care of Muchacho until he was of an age to govern.

The city of Izucan contains about three or four thousand families; its streets and places of trade are well disposed; it had a hundred temples, and very substantial oratories with towers, all of which were consumed. It stands on a plain sloping from a moderate eminence, on which there is a good fortification; and on the other side beyond the plain, it is washed by a deep river which runs near the wall; and a ravine, formed by the lofty banks of the river, passes round it. Above the ravine there is constructed a breastwork, completely enclosing the city, about five feet in height, and a great quantity of stones are collected in piles throughout its whole circuit. The city had in its environs a valley, extremely fertile in fruits and in cotton, which does not grow in any of the mountainous tracts on account of the severity of the cold; here the climate is warm, from its being sheltered by the mountains. All this valley is watered by excellent conduits, which are well formed and arranged.

I remained in this city until I saw its inhabitants resettled in peace; and while I was there the lord of a city called Guajocingo, and another from another city

ten leagues from Izucan, and on the frontiers of Mexico, also came to offer their homage as vassals of your Majesty. There also came persons from eight towns in the province of Coastoaca [Oaxaca], which is one of which I have made mention before, as having been seen by the Spaniards. I sent to search for gold in the province of Zuzula, [Zacatula], where, and in that of Tamazula,* adjoining it, I remarked there was a very large population with houses extremely well built, of better stone than is seen in any of these parts of the country. The province of Coastoaca is forty leagues from Izucan; and the persons from the eight towns in that province professed allegiance as vassals of your Highness, and stated that four others that were left behind would soon arrive. They begged that I would pardon them for not having come before, as they were prevented by fear of the Culuans; and they declared that they had never taken up arms against me, nor caused the death of any Spaniard; and that since they had submitted themselves to your Highness, they would be your true and loyal vassals to perform your will, although they had not dared to do so before on account of their fear of the Culuans. So that your Highness may be assured that if it please our Lord to grant you success, we shall in a very short period recover what has been lost, or a great part of it, as every day many provinces and cities come to swear allegiance to your Majesty, who have been subjects of Muteczuma, for they see that those who do this are well received and kindly treated by me, while those who act otherwise are every day destroyed.

From the prisoners taken in the city of Guacachula, especially the one that was wounded, I obtained exten-

* Tamazula is in the province of Sinaloa, on its southern coast.—L.

sive information as to the state of things in the great city of Temixtitan; in particular, how after the death of Muteczuma, his brother, named Cuetravacin, lord of the city of Iztapalapa, had succeeded him in the government; since the son of Muteczuma who was the heir to the throne had perished at the bridges, and of his two other sons who had been left by us alive, one was an idiot and the other paralytic. For these reasons the brother had succeeded to the throne, who had already declared war against us, and was esteemed by them a valiant and prudent man. I was also informed that the Mexicans were erecting fortifications both in the city and in other parts of their dominions, and were engaged in preparing walls, subterranean passages, ditches, and different kinds of arms. Of the latter were heavy lances, like pikes, for horsemen, some of which we had already seen in the province of Tepeaca, where the enemy had fought with them; and also in the farm-houses and buildings in which the Culuans had been quartered in Guacachula, many of these arms had been found. Of many other things I was likewise informed; but not wishing to be prolix in my accounts to your Majesty, I omit the recital.

I despatched to the island of Española four ships, to bring immediately horses and men for our relief; and I also sent to purchase four others for the purpose of transporting from the same island and the city of St. Domingo, horses, arms, crossbows and powder, as being the most wanted in this country; for foot soldiers bearing small bucklers are of but little use alone, in the midst of so great multitudes of people, possessing such strong and extensive cities and fortifications. I also wrote to the Licentiate, Rodrigo de Figueroa and the officials of your Highness,

who reside on that island, that they should do all in their power to aid and assist in these things, as it was of so great importance to your Majesty's service and the security of our persons; since I intended whenever these succors should arrive to return to the great city and its dominions; and I believed, as I have already said to your Majesty, that I should in a very short time be restored to the condition in which I before was, and recover past losses. In the meantime, I am employed in building twelve brigantines for use on the lakes,* and already the decks and other parts of the vessels are in readiness, which are to be transported by land, so as to be put together in a short time immediately on our arrival there; and for the same purpose we are collecting nails, pitch, oakum, sails, oars, and other necessary articles. And I assure your Majesty that I shall not think of rest until this object is accomplished, nor cease to labor for it in every possible way and manner, to whatever degree of toil, peril, or expense it may expose me.

Two or three days ago I learned by letter from the lieutenant commanding in my place at Vera Cruz, that a small caravel had arrived there with about thirty men, both seamen and landsmen, who report that they had come in quest of the men sent by Francisco de Garay to this country, of whom I have already given your Highness an account, and of their having arrived in great want of provisions, in such distress that if they had not obtained a supply from us, they would have perished with hunger and thirst. I was informed that this caravel had been to the river Panuco, and had remained there thirty days, without seeing any person in

* Tradition uniformly says that this labor was performed in a certain quarter of Hueyotlipan, called Cuausimalan, that is, *Where they make masts.*—L.

the whole river or land; from whence they inferred that on account of what had occurred, the people had abandoned the country. Those in the caravel also informed me, that two other ships of Francisco de Garay had sailed soon after them, with men and horses, and they believed they must have passed down the coast. It seemed to me that it would promote the service of your Highness to prevent those ships and the men in them from being lost, and to guard against the natives doing them even greater injury than the former party uninformed as they were of what had occurred in the country; I therefore sent the caravel in search of the two ships, in order to apprize them of what had passed, and advise their coming to Vera Cruz, where was the first captain sent by Francisco de Garay, waiting their arrival, should it please God that they fall in with them, and in time to prevent their landing; since the natives were already on the look out for them, and the Spaniards not being aware of it I had reason to fear would suffer much injury, to the great disservice of God our Lord and your Highness; for it would be the means of whetting the appetites of those blood-thirsty dogs, and give them resolution and spirit to attack those who should come after.

I have already mentioned that I heard of the elevation of a brother of Muteczuma to the government after the death of the latter, and that this prince, who was named Cuetravecin [Cuithahuatzin], was preparing many kinds of arms, and fortifying the great city and other cities around the lakes. I have since learned that Cuetravecin has sent his messengers throughout the land, the provinces, and cities subject to his power, to declare to and assure his vassals, that he will acquit them for one year of all tributes and services that they are bound to pay, and that

they shall be free from giving or paying any thing—provided that, by every means in their power, they wage an exterminating war against all Christians, either killing them, or driving them out of the country; and that they should treat in the same manner all natives who are our friends and allies. Although I have hope in our Lord that they will not succeed in any respect according to their plan and intentions, I find myself in the most extreme necessity of aiding and succoring the Indians friendly to us; since every day they come from numerous cities, towns, and countries to beg assistance from us against the Indians of Culua, their enemies and ours, who wage war on them because they are in friendship and alliance with us; and I am unable to render aid in every quarter, as I would wish. But as I have said, should it please our Lord, he will supply our want of strength, and send quickly his own succor, as well as that we have asked for from Española.

Inasmuch as this country so far as I have been able to examine and form an opinion bears a striking resemblance to Spain, as well in the fertility of the soil, as in its extent, and the coolness of its climate, and in many other respects, it seemed to me that the most suitable name that could be given to it was New Spain of the ocean-sea; and as this name was conferred upon it in the name of your Majesty, I humbly entreat your Highness to confirm and direct that it shall be so called.

I have written to your Majesty, although in a poor style, the truth as to all that has transpired in these parts, and whatever it is necessary your Highness should be informed of; and in the other despatch that goes with the present one, I send to beg your royal Excellency to appoint a person of high character to come hither and

make inquiry and investigation as to every thing for the information of your sacred Majesty; in this despatch, likewise, I most humbly entreat the same thing, since I shall consider it in the light of a distinguished favor, as the means of imparting entire credit to what I write.

Most noble and most excellent Prince, may God our Lord preserve the life and very royal person and most powerful state of your sacred Majesty, and grant you for a long period the addition of as many greater kingdoms and dominions as your royal heart may desire. Dated at La Villa de la Frontera of this New Spain, the 30th of October, 1520.

From your sacred Majesty's most humble servant and vassal, who kisses the very royal feet and hands of your Highness.

FERNAN. CORTES.

NOTE.*

Afterwards, in the month of March following, there came news from New Spain, that the Spaniards had taken the great city of Temixtitan by storm; when a greater number of Indians perished than of Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian, and in it were more people than in that holy city. They found little treasure, because the inhabitants had taken and thrown it into the waters; they obtained only 200,000 pesos, and the Spaniards remained well fortified in the city, of whom there are now in it fifteen hundred foot and five hundred horse; and they have in the field more than one hundred

* This note appears to have been added to the first edition of this Letter, in 1522, before the receipt of the second letter in Spain.

thousand Indians, natives of the country, in their alliance. These are great things and strange, and it is without doubt a new world, which we who live on its borders have an eager desire to see. This news is to April the first, 1522, which we as yet deem worthy of belief.

The present Letter or Narrative [Carta de Relacion] was printed in the most noble and loyal city of Seville, by Jacob Crombreger, of Germany, on the 8th day of October, 1522.*

* From this date it is known, that the impression of this Letter was the first specimen of the art of printing at Seville, and perchance in all Spain; since the Complutensian Bible is the first printed work, celebrated as published at the expense of the great Cardinal Don Fray Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros.—L.

This is incorrect; according to Panzer, (*Annales Typographici, etc.*) the first printing was done at Seville in 1501, and several publications appeared prior to 1522. The Complutensian Polyglott Bible of Cardinal Ximenes was printed in 1514-17.

LETTER III.

THE THIRD LETTER OR RELATION

SENT BY

HERNANDO CORTES,

CAPTAIN AND CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF YUCATAN, CALLED NEW SPAIN OF THE OCEAN SEA,

TO THE

MOST NOBLE LORD DON CARLOS, EMPEROR,

Concerning the wonderful events of the conquest and recovery of the great and admirable city of Temixtitan, and other tributary provinces, which had rebelled.

Printed at Seville by J. Crombreger Aleman; the printing was finished on the 30th of March, 1523.

NOTE.

On the preceding page the title of the original edition of this Letter is translated from Ternaux's Bibliothèque Américaine. A second edition was published the same year, it seems, at Saragossa, by George Coci Aleman.

The suffix *Aleman* added to the names of these early printers signifies German, or from Germany.

LETTERS OR DESPATCHES

OF

HERNANDO CORTES,

TO THE

EMPEROR CHARLES V.

LETTER III.

Dated at the City of Cuyoacan, (Mexico,) May 15th, 1522.

Most High and Potent Prince: Most Catholic and Invincible Emperor, King and Lord:

Alonzo de Mendoza, a native of Medellin, whom I despatched from this New Spain on the fifth of March, in the past year 1521, was the bearer of the second relation that I addressed to your Majesty, containing an account of all that had transpired in this country; which I finished writing on the thirtieth of October, 1520, but on account of unfavorable weather, and the loss of three ships, by one of which I had intended to forward my relation to your Majesty, and by the others to send for aid to the island of Española, much delay arose on the part of Mendoza, as I have already more fully informed your Majesty. In the concluding part of that despatch I stated to your Majesty, that after we had been forcibly expelled from the city of Temixtitan, I had marched against the province of Tepeaca, one of its

tributaries, that had joined in the rebellion against us; and that with the assistance of the Spaniards who had survived, and our Indian allies, I had succeeded in reducing it again into subjection to your Majesty. I also mentioned that on account of the treason of this people, and the great losses they had occasioned to the Spaniards, some of whom had perished by their hands, all which was still fresh in our minds, I had determined to return in a hostile manner against the great city, which had been the cause of all this trouble; and that for this purpose I should commence building thirteen brigantines, or small sailing vessels, in order with them to accomplish as much as possible to the injury of the city, if its inhabitants persevered in their treasonable designs. I also wrote to your Majesty that while the vessels were building, and I and our Indian allies were making preparations to return against the enemy, I sent to Española for recruits of men, horses, artillery, and arms, and for this purpose I wrote to your Majesty's officials resident there; and I forwarded money sufficient to defray the cost and expenses of all that was necessary for our relief. Your Majesty may be assured that I have not thought of enjoying a moment's repose, nor shall cease to feel the deepest anxiety in regard to this matter, until victory is secure; disregarding whatever of danger, labor and cost may attend this determination, while preparing to take up our line of march from the province of Tepeaca.

I also informed your Majesty that there had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz a caravel belonging to Francisco de Garay, lieutenant-governor of the island of Jamaica, in great distress, with about thirty persons on board; and that two other ships had sailed for the river Panuco, where the natives had attacked and routed a captain of

Francisco de Garay, and it was feared that if these landed there, they would likewise suffer from the hostility of the natives. I also wrote your Majesty that I had taken the precaution to despatch immediately a vessel in quest of those ships, to advise them of what had occurred; and no sooner had I written this, than it pleased God one of the ships should arrive at the port of Vera Cruz, in which came a captain with about twenty-five men, who was there apprised of what had befallen the other party, according to the information received from the commander himself; and I assured them that if they went to the river Panuco, they would be exposed to great danger from the Indians. While they yet lay in the harbor with the determination of going to that river, there arose a storm attended by a violent wind, which forced the ship to depart with the loss of its cables, and to run into a port on the coast twelve leagues above, called San Juan;* when after landing all the people, together with seven or eight horses and as many mares, they hauled up the ship for repairs on account of its having sprung aleak. As soon as I heard these particulars, I wrote immediately to the captain, assuring him that I regretted very much what had occurred, and that I had sent directions to the commander at Vera Cruz to afford every possible aid to him and the people with him, supplying them with whatever they required; that he should ascertain their plans, and if all or any of them wished to return in the ships that were there, he should give them leave, and allow them to depart freely. The captain and the persons who had arrived with him determined to remain, and to join me at the place where I was; but of the other

* The present Vera Cruz.

ship we have not received any intelligence to this moment; and as much time has elapsed, we are in great doubt as to her safety, unless it has pleased God to carry her into a good port.

Being on the point of departing from the province of Tepeaca, I learned that two provinces called Zacatami and Jalazingo, subject to the lord of Temixtitan, through whose territory the road leads from Vera Cruz to the great city, had rebelled, and that the inhabitants being ill-disposed towards us had murdered several Spaniards who were on the road. In order to render the road secure, and visit these people with some punishment if they did not keep the peace, I despatched a captain with twenty horse and two hundred foot, and some of our Indian allies, to whom I gave directions on the part of your Majesty, to require the inhabitants of those provinces to come and quietly submit themselves as vassals of your Majesty, as they had before done, and I would treat them with the utmost moderation in my power; but that if they did not choose to take this course, I would make war upon them. I added, that after this was effected, and the two provinces were reduced to subjection, he should return with all the people to the city of Tascaltecal, where I would wait for him. So he departed, in the beginning of December, 1520, and took the road for those provinces, which lie twenty leagues distant.

After this, most powerful Sire, about the middle of December of said year, I left the town of Segura de la Frontera, which is in the province of Tepeaca, having placed there a captain and sixty men, according to the request of the natives; and I sent all the foot to the city of Tascaltecal, where were building the brigantines, which is nine or ten leagues from Tepeaca; while I

went the same day with twenty horse to sleep at the city of Cholula, whose inhabitants had desired me to come thither, inasmuch as on account of the sickness of small-pox which had attacked the people of these countries, as well as the islanders, many of their caciques had died, and they wished that others might be appointed in their place, by my hand, and in the presence of themselves and me. Having arrived there, we were extremely well received, and after having complied with their wishes in this matter, and given them to understand that my course was to enter in a warlike manner into the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan, I desired them, since they were vassals of your Majesty, and as such must preserve their friendship with us, and we with them even to death, to aid me with men during the time I was compelled to carry on the war; and that as for the Spaniards whom I should send to their country, and who would go and come through it, to treat them in such a manner as they were under obligation as friends to do. After they had promised to do as I requested, having remained in the city two or three days, I departed for Tascaltecal, six leagues distant; and having arrived there, all the Spaniards who were there and the inhabitants of that city assembled and testified their joy at my coming. The next day the nobles of the city and province came to speak with me, and to inform me that Magiscacin, who was the principal of all the nobility, had died of the small-pox, and they knew well that on account of our great friendship for each other, I should be much grieved at this event; but he had left a son twelve or thirteen years of age to whom the rights of his father descended, and they begged of me that I would recognize him as

the heir; which I accordingly did, in the name of your Majesty, with which they were all very much pleased.

When I reached this city, I found that the master workmen and carpenters employed on the brigantines had used great expedition in framing the cross-timbers and decks, and had accomplished a reasonable amount of work; and I at once sent off to Vera Cruz for all the iron and nails that were there, together with the sails, cordage, and other things necessary for the vessels; and as there was no tar, I set some Spaniards about making some on the adjacent mountains. Thus every provision required for the brigantines was attended to, in order that when it pleased God I should be in the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan, I might be able to have them transported thither, a distance of ten or twelve leagues from the city of Tascaltecal; and during the fifteen days that I remained in the latter city, I heard nothing else but the hurrying of the workmen, and the preparation of the arms for the purpose of giving security to our march.

Two or three days before Christmas, the captain with the foot and horse that had gone against the provinces of Zacatami and Jalacingo arrived, from whom I learned that they had fought with some of the natives, and that at last the latter had sued for peace, some of them voluntarily, and others through compulsion; and they brought to me certain caciques of those provinces, whom I pardoned in your Majesty's name, and sent home, notwithstanding they deserved punishment for their rebellion and murder of Christians, upon their promise of good behaviour hereafter, and that they would prove loyal vassals to your Majesty. Thus these difficulties were brought to a close, by means of which the service of

your Majesty was much promoted, as well as in the pacification of the natives in that quarter, as from the security obtained for the Spaniards when compelled to go or come through those provinces to or from the town of Vera Cruz.

The second day after Christmas I reviewed my forces in the city of Tascaltecal, and found forty horse and five hundred foot—eighty of them archers and musketeers, together with eight or nine field-pieces and a very small quantity of powder; and I divided the horse into four companies of ten each, and of the foot I formed nine captaincies, each consisting of sixty Spaniards. After this inspection, when all were mustered together, I addressed them in the following manner:

I said that they must know as well as myself it was to promote the service of your sacred Majesty that we had established colonies in this country; and they also knew that all the natives of it had acknowledged themselves your Majesty's vassals, and as such had for some time persevered in receiving good offices from us, and we the same from them; and that without any cause, the people of Culua, including those in the great city of Temixtitan, and all the other provinces subject to them, had not only rebelled against your Majesty, but even murdered several persons who were our kindred and friends, and had driven us entirely out of their land; and that they must likewise recollect what dangers and toils we had encountered, and at the same time be sensible of how great service it would be to God and your Catholic Majesty to endeavor to recover what had been lost, having on our part the justest cause and the best reasons for so doing, as we should both contend for the increase of our faith against a barbarous nation, and to

promote the service of your Majesty. Induced also by a regard to our own safety, and having the co-operation of many of the friendly natives, there were powerful causes to animate our hearts, and I therefore begged them to engage cheerfully in the enterprise and take fresh courage. I added that I had in your Majesty's name issued certain ordinances to preserve good order and regulate the affairs of the war, which I had caused to be immediately published, and I also begged them to observe and comply with these regulations, as it would redound much to the service of God and your Majesty.

They all promised to do what I requested, and to comply with the ordinances, declaring that they would die with pleasure in defence of our faith and in the service of your Majesty, or recover what had been lost and revenge the treachery of which the people of Temixtitan and their allies had been guilty towards us. Thereupon, in the name of your Majesty, I expressed my satisfaction, and thus we returned with great pleasure to our quarters on the day of the review.

The following day, which was that of St. John the Evangelist, [Dec. 27th] I sent for all the lords of the province of Tascaltecal, and when they had come, I said to them that they already knew I was to depart on the next day in order to enter the territory of our enemies, and that they must be aware we could not conquer the city of Temixtitan without some brigantines, which our people were then employed in building there, and on this account I desired them to supply the workmen and other Spaniards that I left behind, with whatever was necessary for this business, and treat them kindly, as they had ever done; and that they should be in readiness whenever I should send from the city of Tesaico, [Tezcuco,]

(if God gave us victory) for the timbers and decks and other necessary things belonging to the brigantines. They promised me to do so, and expressed a desire to send their warriors with me, declaring that when the brigantines were removed, they would all go, with the whole population of their country, and that they would die with me, or be revenged on the Culuans, their mortal enemies. The next day, which was the 28th of December, the day of the Innocents, I set out with all our force drawn up in order, and marched as far as a place called Tezmoluca, six leagues from Tascaltecal, in the province of Guajocingo, the inhabitants of which have always observed the same friendship and alliance with us as the people of Tascaltecal: and there we reposed for the night.

In my former despatch, most Catholic Sire, I stated that the people of the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan, as I was informed, had made great preparations of arms, and constructed fosses, entrenchments and fortresses to oppose our entrance, as they already knew my intention to return against them. Aware of this, and how skilful and ingenious they were in matters relating to war, I had often meditated in what manner I could take them by surprise. Since they understood that we possessed information of three routes or avenues, by each of which we could enter their territory, I determined to take this one by Tezmoluca; because, as the pass over the mountains on this route was more rough and cragged than the others, I believed the resistance would not be so great, nor the enemy so well prepared. The next day after the Innocents, having heard mass, and committed ourselves to God, we set forth from Tezmoluca, myself leading the van, with ten horse and sixty foot,

lightly armed, composed of men inured to war. We pursued our route, leading up the pass in the best order and the utmost regularity, until we had gone four leagues from Tesmoluca, to the summit of the pass, where was the boundary of Culua; and although the cold at that place was the most severe I had yet experienced, with much snow, we guarded against it that night, and the next day, being Sunday, we began to descend into the plain. I sent forward four horse and three or four foot to reconnoitre the country; and when on our way down the pass, I ordered the horse in front, to be followed by the archers and musketeers, and then the rest of the army; being satisfied that however unprepared we might find the enemy, they would sally forth to attack us on our route, using for that purpose some cunning stratagem or artifice to annoy us. When the four horsemen and four foot soldiers examined the road, they found it obstructed with trees and branches, and filled up and encumbered with large and heavy pines and cypresses, which appeared to have just been cut; and thinking that the road beyond might not be obstructed in this manner, they contrived to advance, but the further they proceeded the more obstructions they found. The horses advancing with difficulty, their fears increased as they continued their course, and when they had in this way proceeded a considerable distance, one of the four horsemen said to the others—"Brothers, let us not go any farther, if it please you, but return and inform the commander of the obstructions that we have found, and the great danger to which we are exposed in not being able to go on with the horses; otherwise, let us proceed, although by so doing I expose my life, as you all do yours, until we reach the end of this route." The others answered—"that his

advice was good, but it did not appear to them proper to return to me till they had discovered some of the enemy, or ascertained how far this road extended." They then resumed their course, and when they saw that the road continued a great distance, they stopped, and sent one of the foot soldiers to inform me of what they had discovered. And when I had brought up the vanguard with the cavalry, commending ourselves to God we proceeded forward on that road, and I sent word to the rear-guard to make great haste, and entertain no fears, for we should soon come out upon the open land, free from obstructions.

As soon as I had overtaken the four horsemen, we began to advance together, but not without encountering serious impediments and difficulties; until at the distance of half a league it pleased God that we should enter upon the open ground, and there I took breath while waiting for the rest of the people to come up. When they had arrived, I bade them give thanks to our Lord, who had brought us in safety to that spot from whence we could see all the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan, both on the lakes and around them. But although we regarded them with great satisfaction, this feeling was not unmixed with sadness when we recalled the losses we had experienced there, and we all resolved never to quit the country again without victory, even should it cost us our lives. With this determination we proceeded forward with as much alacrity as if we had been going on a party of pleasure. As soon as the enemy perceived us, they began on a sudden to kindle signal fires, many and large, throughout the country; and I begged and urged upon the Spaniards to do as they had ever done, and as was expected from them, by observing the utmost

degree of order and regularity on the march. Already the Indians were beginning to utter loud cries from their dwellings and small villages, calling upon the whole country to pour forth its population, and attack us on the bridges and in the difficult passes on our route. But we advanced so rapidly that before they had time to rally their forces, we had already descended to the plain. They, however, planted several squadrons of Indians in the road on our front, and I gave orders for fifteen of the horsemen to attack them, who rushed upon them with their lances and destroyed many without any loss on our part. We continued our route to the city of Tesaico, which is one of the largest and most beautiful cities in all this country. As the foot soldiers were somewhat weary, and it was now evening, we lodged at a small place called Coatepeque, which is subject to that city, from which it is three leagues distant; we found it deserted by the inhabitants. That night we thought how very large and populous were this city and province, (the latter called Aculuacan,) which, it may be safely believed, contained at one time more than a hundred and fifty thousand men,* and from whom we were exposed to an attack. With but ten horsemen I commenced the watch, and went its rounds the first quarter, and took care that all the people should be well prepared against the enemy.

The next day, (Monday, the last day of December,) we resumed our march in the usual order; and at a quarter of a league from Coatepeque, being all in great perplexity, reasoning with ourselves whether the Tesai-

* Tezcuco at the present day is a populous city, and there are numerous villages in its suburbs, together with handsome farm-houses, or haciendas.—L.

cans would be hostile or pacific towards us, and concluding the former to be almost certain, there met us on the road four principal Indians, bearing a standard of gold in the form of a mace, weighing four marcs of gold, by which they gave us to understand that they proposed peace, which God knows how much we desired, and how much we stood in need of, being so few in number, and so far removed from all succor, in the midst of the forces of the enemy. As soon as I discovered these four Indians, one of whom I knew very well, I caused the army to halt, while I advanced towards them. After saluting us, they said to me that they had come on behalf of the lord of that city and province, whose name was Guanacacin, and desired in his name that I would do no injury, nor consent that any should be done to his country, since they had not been guilty of wrong towards us, but that the people of Temixtitan were the offenders; that they wished to be vassals of your Majesty, and our allies, desiring always to preserve our friendship; and that we might proceed to their city and learn by their acts what their sentiments were towards us. I answered them by interpreters, that I was glad to have peace and friendship with them; but that although they excused themselves from the guilt of the war made upon us in the city of Temixtitan, yet they knew well that in certain villages subject to them, five or six leagues from the city of Tesaico,* they had destroyed at another time five of our horsemen and forty-five foot, together with more than three hundred Indians of Tascaltecal, who had arrived there laden with goods; and that a large quantity

* Tezcuco was a separate kingdom from that of Mexico before the arrival of Cortes.—L. Its name is uniformly written by Cortes *Tesaico.*

of silver, gold, cotton cloth, and other things belonging to us, had been seized by them on that occasion; that as they could offer no excuse for this offence, the least penalty they could suffer would be the restoration to us of what they had taken; and that on these terms, although they were all deserving of death for having destroyed the lives of so many Christians, I would make peace with them, as they desired it; but that otherwise I should proceed against them with the utmost rigor. They replied that the Mexican lord and nobles had carried away what had been taken from our people, but that they would search for all that might have been left behind, and give it to me. And they inquired whether I would go to the city that day, or lodge in one of two villages in its suburbs, called Coatinchan and Guasuta,* which are a league and a half distant from the city, but connected with it by a continued line of population. They desired the latter, as appeared from what followed. I told them that I would not stop till I had reached the city of Tesaico; when they remarked that we should be in good time, and they would precede us in order to get ready suitable lodgings for the Spaniards and myself. They accordingly went away, and when we had arrived at the two villages, some of their principal men came out to receive us, and supplied us with food. At noon we reached the body of the city, where we were to lodge in a large edifice that had been the residence of the father of Guanacacin, the lord of the city. Before taking pos-

* Coathlinchan and Huejotla; and it appears as one settlement from Chiautla and Tezcuco to Coatepec, by the continued line of villages and haciendas. In Tezcuco are still seen near the church fragments of the king's palace, and a large reservoir. In Huejotla are seen still larger ruins, including a wall of admirable workmanship.—L.—See Bullock's Travels in Mexico, Chap. 28th.

session of this palace, assembling all our people, I caused it to be proclaimed, that "no one, under pain of death, should go out of the quarters assigned to us without express permission from me." The building was so large that it would have accommodated us in the most convenient manner, had the number of Spaniards been twice as great. I took this precaution in order that the inhabitants of the city might feel secure, and remain in their abodes; for it seemed to me that we did not see a tenth part of the people usually found in the city, nor any women or children—which was a sure mark of a state of alarm and panic.

The day we entered that city, which was New-Year's eve, after having been employed in establishing ourselves in our quarters, notwithstanding we were somewhat surprised to see so few people, and those we did see so dull and stupid, we thought it was from fear that they did not show themselves about the streets of the city; and with this reflection we were somewhat relieved from our apprehensions. Scarcely had the evening arrived, however, when certain Spaniards ascended several lofty terraces, from whence they could survey the whole city, and observed that all the inhabitants were leaving it, some taking with them their effects to embark in their canoes (which they call *alcales*) on the lake, and others climbing the mountains. I instantly ordered their departure to be stopped, but as it was already evening, and would soon be dark, and they made great haste in their movements, nothing was effected. The lord of the city, whom I desired to have in my hands as a pledge of our safety, fled with many of his nobles to the city of Temixtitan, which is six leagues distant by the way of the lake, and they took with them whatever they could

carry of their property. For this purpose, to enable them to execute their design in safety, the messengers mentioned above had been sent to me to arrest my progress, and prevent my doing injury to them on entering the city; and thus, for that night, they abandoned both us and their city.

After I had been in this manner three days in the city, without having encountered any Indians, (as during that time they neither ventured to trust themselves in our power, nor did we care to go far in quest of them; nevertheless my intention being to receive them always when they came to desire peace, and at all times to seek peace with them,) there came to confer with me the lords of Coatinchan, Guaxuta, and Autengo,* (which are three very large places, and are, as I have already said, incorporated with and joined to this city,) who begged me with tears in their eyes to pardon them for having been absent from their territory; declaring at the same time that they had not fought against me, at least of their own accord, and promising henceforth to do every thing I should command them in the name of your Majesty. I answered them by interpreters, that they had always been well treated by me, and that in deserting their country, and in other respects, they were in fault; that since they promised to be our friends, they must return to their houses, and bring back their women and children, when I would treat them according to their acts. They then went away, as it appeared to us, not very well satisfied.

When the Lord of Mexico and Temixtitan, and all the other lords of Culua, (the latter name being applied to

* Coathlinchan, Huejotla, and Atengo; the latter also called Tenango, Tepopula.—L.

the lands and provinces in these parts subject to Temixtitan,) learned that the caciques of these places had come to offer themselves as vassals of your Majesty, they sent messengers to tell them that they had done wrong; and that if they had acted from fear, they should reflect that the people of Culua were sufficiently numerous and powerful to destroy the lives of all the Spaniards and Tlascallans in a very short space of time; but if they had acted from a desire to retain their lands, they might leave them and go to Temixtitan, where they would receive other and better possessions and places of residence. The caciques of Coatinchan and Guaxuta took these messengers and bound them, and delivered them to me; when they immediately acknowledged that they had been sent by the lords of Temixtitan; but that it had been for the purpose of requesting these caciques to go to that city to act as mediators in making peace between them and me, as they were my friends. But they of Coatinchan and Guaxuta denied that it was so, declaring that the people of Mexico and Temixtitan sought only war; and although I believed this was the case, and it proved to be the truth, nevertheless as I desired to bring back the inhabitants of the great city into friendship with us, since on this depended peace or war with the other provinces that had revolted, I caused the messengers to be set at liberty, saying to them, that they need have no fears, it being my intention to allow them to return to Temixtitan; and I begged them to inform its lords that I did not seek war with them, although I had great reason for so doing, but wished we might become friends again; and to render my intentions the more certain, and induce them to return to your Majesty's service, I informed them I was well aware that all those

who took the lead in the passed war against us were now dead; that the past was past, and they should not seek to give me fresh provocation to lay waste their lands and cities, as it would distress me much. With these words I dismissed them, and they departed, promising to bring me an answer. The caciques of Coatinchan, Guaxuta, and myself, were by this affair rendered greater friends, and bound together in a closer confederacy. I forgave them their past errors, and thus they left us well satisfied.

After having been seven or eight days in this city of Tesaico without being engaged in hostilities, or encountering any one, fortifying our quarters, and regulating other matters necessary for our defence, as well as for offensive operations against the enemy; and finding that they did not come to attack me, I sallied forth from the city with two hundred Spaniards, amongst whom were eighteen horse, thirty bowmen, and ten musketeers, together with three or four thousand Indians, our allies. I proceeded along the coast of the lake to a city called Iztapalapa, which is by water two leagues from the great city of Temixtitan, and six from Tesaico; it contains about ten thousand families, and half or two thirds of it are situated on the water. Its lord, who was a brother of Muteczuma, and whom the Indians after the death of the latter had made his successor, was the most active in making war upon us, and driving us out of the city. On this account, as well as because I had known its inhabitants were ill disposed towards us, I determined to proceed directly towards the city of Iztapalapa. As soon as I was discovered by them, when two leagues distant, and before I had arrived, there appeared immediately in the field some hostile Indians, and others in their canoes on

the lake; and thus we proceeded two leagues, fighting all the way, both with those on land and those on the water, until we reached that city. When we had arrived within about two thirds of a league, they opened a dike, situated between the fresh and salt water lakes, as may be seen on the map of the city of Temixtitan that I sent to your Majesty. When the causeway or dike was opened, the water of the salt lake began to flow with great impetuosity towards the fresh lake, although the lakes are more than half a league distant from one another; and not looking for any deception, in our eagerness for victory, we passed along very well, and followed the track of the enemy, until we entered the city at the same time with them. As the people were apprised of our coming, all the houses on the main land were deserted, and the people with their effects took refuge in the houses on the lake, where were assembled all those who had fled before us, who fought with great desperation. But it pleased our Lord to give such strength to his people that we pursued them into the water, sometimes where it was breast deep, in other places swimming; and we took many of their houses situated on the water. More than six thousand of the people, men, women, and children, perished; for the Indians, our allies, seeing we were victorious, would listen to nothing, but only cut to the right and left.

As night approached, I collected the people and set fire to some of the houses; and while these were burning, it seemed that our Lord inspired me, by bringing to my recollection the causeway or mole, which we had seen broken on our route, and the great danger in which it placed us; and hastening with my collected force, I departed out of the city, it being already quite dark.

When we reached the water, at almost nine in the evening, it was so deep, and the current so strong, that we passed it half running and half flying; some of our Indian allies were drowned, and all the spoil was lost that had been taken in the city. And I assure your Majesty, that if we had not passed the water that night, or had remained in the city three hours longer, none of us would have escaped,* but we should have been surrounded by water without being able to find a passage out in any direction. When it was day-light we saw that the water of one lake was on a level with that of the other, and there was no current; and all the salt lake was covered with canoes, filled with warriors, thinking to take us at this place. The same day I returned to Tesaico, fighting occasionally by the way with those who were on the lake, although we could do them little harm, as they escaped readily in their canoes; and arriving at the city of Tesaico, I found the people I had left there perfectly secure, without having had a single hostile encounter; and our return and victory gave them much pleasure. The next day after our return a Spaniard died who had come back wounded; and he was the first one killed in the field by the Indians to the present time.

The next day certain messengers came to this city from the city of Otumba,† and four other cities adjacent to it, which are four, five, and six leagues distant from

* Part of the town of Iztapalapa was built on land, and part on the water; and the Indians broke the dikes that formed a communication between the two lakes.—L.

† It bears the same name at the present day; and in its neighborhood are San Juan Teotihuacan, Ajapusco, Cuatlanzingo, (which was very large,) Ostoticpac, Tecpayucan, Jaltepec, Nopaltepec, and the hacienda of Ometusco.—L.

Tesaico. They asked me to pardon their offence, if they had committed any, in regard to the late war that had been waged against me; for it was at Otumba that the whole power of Mexico and Temixtitan had been concentrated, with the hope of finally crushing us, at the time we had been driven out of the great city. These Otumbans saw plainly that they could not deny their guilt, but they excused themselves by saying that they had obeyed the commands of their superiors; and in order to induce me to favor them, they declared that the lords of Temixtitan had sent messengers to them, bidding them to adhere to their cause, and form no friendship with us, otherwise they would come and destroy them; but that they preferred to be the vassals of your Majesty, and to obey my commands. I answered, that they were well aware of their past offences, and in order that I should pardon them, and believe what they said, they must first bring to me as prisoners the messengers of whom they had spoken, and all the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan that were in their country; and that on no other conditions would I pardon them; that they should return to their abodes and occupy them, and show by their actions that they were good subjects of your Majesty. Though we exchanged a few more words, they could not induce me to change my determination; and so they returned to their country, assuring me that they would always do what I desired; and from that time they have ever proved to be loyal and obedient in the service of your Majesty.

In my former despatch, most fortunate and excellent Prince, I informed your Majesty that at the time they routed and drove us from the city of Temixtitan, I took with me a son and two daughters of Muteczuma, to-

gether with the lord of Tesaico,* named Cacamacin, and his two brothers, and many other caciques, all of whom perished at the hands of the enemy, (though of the same nation, and some even the lords of those who destroyed them,) with the exception of the two brothers of Cacamacin, who by great good fortune were enabled to make their escape. One of these brothers, named Ipacsuchil, otherwise called Cucascacin, (who had been before made lord of the city of Tesaico and the province of Aculuacan, by me, in the name of your Majesty, and by the advice of Muteczuma,) at the time when I reached the province of Tascaltecal, being then in the condition of a prisoner, got liberated and returned to the city of Tesaico, where another brother named Guanacacin, mentioned above, had been created lord. It is said that Cacascacin suffered death at the hands of this brother in the following manner: When he arrived at Tesaico, the guards seized him, and gave information to Guanacacin, the lord, who communicated it to the lord of Temixtitan. The latter, as soon as he heard of the arrival of Cucascacin, could not believe that he had escaped from us, but imagined that he would return to our camp when he should have obtained intelligence of importance to carry with him; he therefore sent immediate orders to Guanacacin to put Cucascacin, his brother, to death, who did not fail to execute the command without delay. The other brother, who was the youngest, remained with me, and as he was quite a youth, his intercourse with us produced a greater impression on his mind; and he became a Christian,† taking the name of Don Fernando.

* Cacamacin was a relative of Muteczuma, and his tributary, being a son of Nezahualpilli, with whom the independence of the province ceased, it falling under the power of Muteczuma.—L.

† This was the most celebrated conversion next to that of the four lords of Tlascala.—L.

At the time I left the province of Tascaltecal for Mexico and Temixtitan, he remained there with several Spaniards; and I shall hereafter inform your Majesty of what afterwards occurred to him.

The day following my return from Iztapalapa to the city of Tesaico, I determined to despatch Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor of your Majesty, in command of twenty horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers, together with bowmen, musketeers, and men armed with sword and buckler, to accomplish two very necessary purposes; first, to escort out of this province certain messengers that I proposed to send to the city of Tescaltecal, to ascertain what progress had been made on the thirteen brigantines which were building there, and to provide things necessary both for the men stationed at Vera Cruz, as well as for my own company; and in the second place, to render secure that part of the country, so that the Spaniards could come and go without danger; since heretofore we were unable to leave the province of Aculuacan without passing through the enemy's country, nor could the Spaniards at Vera Cruz and other places come to us without great peril from the enemy. I also directed the alguazil mayor, that after he had escorted the messengers to a place of safety, he should go to a province called Calco, bordering on that of Aculuacan, in order to obtain a confirmation of the statement that the people of that province were desirous, although belonging to the Culuan league, to surrender themselves as vassals of your Majesty, and that they were prevented from doing so by reason of a garrison of Culuans that existed amongst them.

The captain departed, and with him went all the Indians of Tascaltecal who had transported our baggage,

and others who had come to our aid, and had taken some of the spoils of war. The latter proceeded a considerable distance in front, Sandoval believing that when the enemy discovered the Spaniards to be in the rear they would not dare to make an attack. But as soon as the people in the towns on the lake and along the coast who were unfriendly to us espied the Tascaltecans, they attacked them in their rear, stripped them of their spoil, and even killed some of them. As soon as the captain came up with the cavalry and the foot, he rushed upon the enemy, assailing them with spears, and destroyed many of their number; those who escaped took refuge on the lake and in the villages on its borders. The Indians of Tascaltecal pursued their way to their own country with what they had saved, together with the messengers I had sent; and when all had reached a place of safety, Gonzalo de Sandoval took the road to the province of Calco, which was not far distant. The next morning many of the enemy assembled to go forth and attack him; and when some of them were in one part of the field, and others in others, our people fell upon them briskly, and two squadrons with the cavalry completely routed them, so that in a short time they abandoned the field to our men, who pursued with fire and sword.*

After this the road being cleared, the inhabitants of Calco came forth to receive the Spaniards; and on both sides congratulations were freely exchanged. The principal citizens said they wished to come and see me, and have a conference with me; so they departed and came to lodge at Tesaico. When they had arrived, there

*This battle was fought on the plain over which the road passes from Tetzcuco to Chalco.—L.

visited me several of the principal men with two sons of the cacique of Calco, and gave me nearly three hundred pesos of gold in pieces. The latter informed me of the death of their father, and that when he died he told them that what disturbed him most was not to be able to see me before his death, and that he had been expecting many days to see me; that he had charged them to come to me as soon as I arrived in the province, and take me for their father; and that when they heard of my arrival at the city of Tesaico, they immediately desired to come and see me, but that they dared not from fear of the Culuans; nor should they have ventured to come at all, had not the captain I had sent visited their country; and they requested me to give them a guard of Spaniards to enable them to return in safety. They also stated what I knew to be true, that neither in war nor in peace had they been unfriendly to me; and I also knew that at the time when the Culuans attacked the fortress and palace at Temixtitan and the Spaniards left there by me when I went to look after Narvaez at Cempoal, there were two Spaniards in the country in charge of a quantity of maize, which I had ordered them to collect, whom they took to the province of Guajocingo, because they knew that the people there were my friends; in order by this means to save them from the Culuans, who killed all the Spaniards they found out of the palace at Temixtitan. These things and much else they said to me, with tears in their eyes; I thanked them for their friendly disposition and acts of kindness, promising to do all they desired, and that they should be well treated. And from that time to the present they have constantly shown a friendly spirit, and have proved very obedient in respect

to every thing commanded them on the part of your Majesty.

The sons of the cacique of Chalco,* and those who accompanied them, being one day at my quarters, requested that as they wished to return to their country, I would give them an escort to enable them to go in safety. Accordingly Gonzalo de Sandoval with a portion of the cavalry and foot soldiers accompanied them; and I directed him that after he had seen them safe in their country, he should go to the province of Tascaltecal, and bring back with him certain Spaniards who were there, and likewise Don Hernando, the brother of Cacamacin, of whom I have spoken above. After four or five days the alguazil mayor returned with the Spaniards, and brought with him the said Don Fernando. A few days after I learned that on account of his being a brother of the caciques of this city, the office of cacique appertained to him, although he had other brothers. For this reason, as well as because the province was without a cacique, Guanacucin, brother of Don Fernando, its lord, having left it and gone to the city of Temixtitan; and also in consequence of his being a great friend to Christians, I caused Don Fernando to be received as the lord in your Majesty's name. The inhabitants of the city, although at that time there were but few left in it, acknowledged him; and from thenceforth many of those who were absent, and had fled from the city, began to return, and obey and serve Don Fernando; and the city itself improved in character as well as increased greatly in population.

* Chalco, although it had a cacique of its own, was tributary to Mexico.—L. The orthography of this name is here changed in the original from Calco to *Chalco*, as now written.

About two days after this there came to me the lords of Coatinchan and Guaxuta, and gave me information that there was no doubt all the power of Culua would be brought against me and the Spaniards, the whole country being full of our enemies; and that I must consider whether they should bring their women and children where I was, or take them to the mountains, as they were filled with consternation. I encouraged them, and bade them dismiss their fears, and remain in their houses without making any change; adding, that nothing would please me more than to see the Culuans in the field. I charged them to be vigilant, placing their scouts and sentinels in every quarter, and that as soon as they saw or heard the movements of the enemy, they should immediately inform me. So they went away with the determination to do as I had directed.

The same night I got our whole force in readiness, and set many sentries and scouts in all directions where it seemed necessary; and during the whole night we had no sleep, and thought of nothing else but the enemy, both that night and the following day, in consequence of what we had been told by the lords of Guaxuta and Guatinchan. The next day I learned that some of the hostile Indians had been prowling along the coast of the lake for the sake of plunder, and with the expectation of cutting off the Indians of Tascaltecal, who were coming and going in the service of the camp; and I likewise ascertained that they had confederated with two people subject to Tesaico, and dwelling near the lake, to do us all the mischief in their power. I caused redoubts, ditches, and other works to be constructed in that quarter as a means of defence; and the day after I took twelve horse, two hundred foot, and two small field pieces, and went

to the place where the enemy had been, about a league and a half from the city. On my way I fell in with certain spies of the enemy, and others engaged in plunder, whom we routed and pursued, killing several of them. The survivors threw themselves into the water. When we had burned some of their villages, we returned to our quarters much gratified with our success. The next day three of the chief men of the towns came to ask pardon for the past, and begged I would destroy no more of their towns, promising no longer to admit the people of Temixtitan into their towns. As they were not persons of much consideration, and were vassals of Don Fernando, I pardoned them in your Majesty's name. The day following several of these people came to me wounded and otherwise injured, and said that the Mexicans and Temixtitans had returned to their place, and not meeting with the reception to which they had been accustomed, had ill-treated them and taken some of their number prisoners; and that if they had not defended themselves, they would all have been made prisoners. They requested that I would be ready in case the Temixtitans returned, to come to their relief; and then went away to their homes.

The people that I had left in the province of Tascaltecal, engaged in building the brigantines, received intelligence that a ship had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, in which besides the seamen there were thirty or forty Spaniards, eight horses, several archers and musketeers, and a quantity of powder; and as they were not informed as to the progress of the war, nor whether they could join us with safety, they were in much perplexity; and the Spaniards who had remained at Vera Cruz did not dare to come, although they wished to bring

me so good news. When a servant of mine who had been left at that place perceived that some of the men were desirous of attempting to reach me, he issued an order, forbidding, under a heavy penalty, any one leaving the place until directions were received from me. But a young man in my service, being convinced that nothing in the world would give me greater joy than to hear of the arrival of the ship and the succor it had brought, set out in the night and came to Tesaico, although the country was unsafe, and we were much surprised to see him come in alive. The news gave us much pleasure, for we were in extreme need of relief.

The same day, most Catholic Sire, there arrived at Tesaico certain true men, messengers from the authorities at Chalco, who informed me that in consequence of their having offered themselves as vassals to your Majesty, all the forces of Mexico and Temixtitan had invaded their country to destroy them; and that on this account they had rallied together and got in readiness all the neighboring people, and they desired that I would come to their relief and aid them in their extremity, for they saw no other way to save themselves. I assure your Majesty, as I have already done in my former relation, that next to our toils and sufferings, the greatest source of sorrow I experienced was in not having the ability to assist and relieve our Indian friends, who by becoming vassals of your Majesty had exposed themselves to be molested and annoyed by the people of Culua. Nevertheless, both myself and those with me did every thing in our power to accomplish this purpose, for it seemed to us that we could in no way serve your imperial Majesty more effectually than by favoring and aiding your vassals. But at the juncture when applica-

tion was made to me by the people of Chalco, I was unable to do for them what I desired; I however told them, that since I now wished to send for the brigantines, and with that view had got ready all the people of the province of Tascaltecal, from whence they would be brought in detached pieces, and should find it necessary to despatch thither on the same business both horse and foot—I would ask in my own name the inhabitants of Guajocingo, Churultecal, and Guacachula, who were vassals of your Majesty and friends of ours, to go to their assistance, as they lived in the same neighborhood; who would send them men for their defence, and render them secure until I could come to their relief—this being the only succor I could afford them. Although they did not take their leave as well satisfied as if I had given them a Spanish force, they thanked me, and asked that I would give them a letter as a voucher, that they might solicit aid with greater confidence; since between the people of Chalco and two of those provinces, being of opposite parties, differences had always existed.

While I was engaged in regulating these matters, there happened to arrive certain messengers from the above-mentioned provinces of Guajocingo and Guacachula, who in the presence of those of Chalco said, that the lords of those provinces had neither seen nor heard any thing of me since my departure from Tascaltecal, although they had posted their scouts or sentries upon the mountains and hills bounding their country and overlooking Mexico and Temixtitan, in order that when they saw many smokes, the signal of war, they might come to my assistance with their vassals and people; and since within a short time they had seen more smokes than usual, they had come to know how it was, that in case any necessity

existed, they might at once get ready their men of war. I was much gratified, I told them, with their alacrity, and assured them that, thanks to our blessed Lord, the Spaniards and myself were in good condition, constantly victorious against the enemy; and that besides being pleased with their good disposition and presence, it afforded me still greater satisfaction to form a union of friendship between them and the people of Chalco, whose deputies were now present; and I begged them, since they were both vassals of your Majesty, to become good friends and aid and assist one another against the Culuans, who were wicked and perverse; especially at this time, when the people of Chalco had need of assistance, as the Culuans were about to march against them. Thus they became friends and confederates; and after they had remained two days with me they departed cheerful and contented, and rendered mutual service to one another.

Three days after, when we knew that thirteen brigantines had been completed, and the people collected to transport them, I sent Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor, with fifteen horse and two hundred foot, to escort them; to whom I gave directions to destroy and raze to the ground a large town subject to this city of Tesaico, that lies contiguous to the boundary of the province of Tascaltecal, whose inhabitants had killed five of our horsemen and forty-five foot while on the route from Vera Cruz to the city of Temixtitan, at the time I was besieged in it, unable to believe in the possibility of so great an act of treason. When we entered Tesaico on our return, we found in the oratories or temples of the city the skins of the five horses sewed up and containing the horse-shoes, and the feet and hands of the men;

the skins being as well tanned as could be done in any part of the world, which together with much cotton cloth and the effects of the Spaniards were thus offered to their idols. And we found the blood of our companions and brothers spilled and sacrificed in all the towns and temples; the occasion of much grief, as it renewed the memory of all our past suffering. The traitors of that and the adjoining towns, at the time the Christians passed through them, gave them a good reception, in order to lull them into security, for the purpose of perpetrating the greatest piece of cruelty that was ever practised; for whilst our men were descending a declivity at a slow pace, all being on foot, dragging their horses by their bridles, and impeded at every step, the enemy, concealed in ambush on both sides of the difficult pass, fell upon the midst of them, killing some, and taking others alive to carry them to be sacrificed at Tesaico, and pluck out their hearts before their idols. That this was the fate of some of them, appears from the fact that when the alguazil mayor abovementioned passed that way, certain Spaniards that accompanied him discovered in a house of a village between Tesaico and where the Christians were killed and made prisoners, the following words written with coal on a white wall: "Here the unfortunate Juan Yuste was a prisoner."* This person was a cavalier, one of the five horsemen of the party; and the sight of these words, without doubt, filled the hearts of all who observed them with profound grief. The alguazil mayor having arrived at this town, the inhabitants, conscious of their great guilt, began to seek refuge in flight, and the Spanish horse and foot

* It was the town of Zultepec in which this discovery was made. Juan de Yuste was the man who advised Narvaez to seize Juan Velazquez.—L.

with our Indian friends pursued them, killing many, and taking a large number of women and children prisoners, who were condemned to slavery; but moved by compassion, he endeavored as much as possible to spare their lives; and before his departure from the place, he caused the survivors to be collected together, and put them in possession of the town, which at this time is very populous, and its inhabitants regretful of the past.

The alguazil mayor passed on five or six leagues to a village of Tascaltecal, the nearest to the border of Culua, where he found the Spaniards and people prepared to transport the brigantines. The day after his arrival, they set out from thence with the planks and cross-timbers, which more than eight thousand men were engaged in transporting; a sight wonderful to behold, and as it appears to me, to hear of, the transportation of thirteen vessels eighteen leagues by land; and I assure your Majesty that from the advance guard to the rear was a distance of full two leagues. When they began to move, eight horsemen and one hundred Spanish foot went before; and in the van, and along the flanks, were more than ten thousand men of war, commanded by captains, at the head of whom were Yutecad (Aientecatl) and Teutipil, two of the principal chiefs of Tascaltecal; in the rear guard came another hundred and more Spaniards, with eight horsemen, and ten thousand men of war, well disposed, commanded by Chichimecatecle, one of the principal men of that province, together with other captains who accompanied him. At the time they first set out, Chichimecatl commanded the van with the plank, and the two other captains brought up the rear with the cross-timbers; but when entering the territory of Culua, the masters of the brigantines directed the cross timbers to be carried in front, and the plank in the rear,

as the latter would occasion most embarrassment in case of their meeting with obstructions, which was more likely to occur in front than rear. But Chichimecatl, who had charge of the planks, and had always led the van with his warriors, took offence at this arrangement, and it was a hard matter to induce him to consent to be left in the rear guard, because he courted whatever danger might occur in the transportation; and when he finally yielded to the arrangement, he was not willing that any Spaniards should remain in the rear guard, as he was a man of great energy and sought to gain honor to himself. The same captains had under their charge two thousand Indians loaded with provisions.

It was in this order, and according to this arrangement that they took up the line of march, in which they consumed three days, and on the fourth entered this city [Tezcuco] with great rejoicing and noise of kettle-drums, when I went out to receive them. As I have mentioned above, the people stretched out to so great a distance, that from the time those in front began to enter until the last had come up, more than six hours had passed without breaking the line of people. After they had arrived, and I had expressed my gratification to the caciques for their good services, I provided quarters for them together with the best supplies that could be procured. They assured me that they had come with a strong desire to engage with the Culuans, and that I should see that whatever might be my commands, they and their people had come with the desire and determination to be revenged, or die with us. I thanked them, and begged they would take some repose, promising that I would soon give them their hands full.*

* Yo les di las gracias, y dije que reposasen, y *que presto les daria las manos llenas.*

CHAPTER II.

After all the warriors of Tascaltecal had reposed in Tesaico three or four days, (when it appeared manifest that compared with others of the country they were a superior people,) I ordered to be in readiness twenty-five horse, three hundred foot, and fifty archers and musketeers, with six small field-pieces, and without saying aught to any one as to our destination, I left the city at nine o'clock in the morning; and with me went the captains abovementioned, and more than thirty thousand men, arranged in squadrons according to their manner. At four leagues from this city, when it was hardly dark, we encountered a squadron of the enemy's warriors; our cavalry at once broke through them, and we put them to route. The Tlascallans, as they are swift of foot, followed us, and many of the enemy were slain; that night we slept on the field, keeping a strict watch. The next morning we resumed our march, and I informed no one whither it was my intention to go, because I feared lest some of the Tesaicans who were with us should give information of my plans to those of Mexico and Temixtitan, as I could not feel entirely secure of their fidelity. We arrived at a village called Jultoca, situated in the midst of a lake, and around it we found many large ditches full of water; it was so strongly fortified that our cavalry could not effect an entrance, and the enemy uttered many loud cries, discharging upon us great numbers of darts and arrows; but the infantry

succeeded in entering the place, though with great difficulty, and drove out the inhabitants and consumed a great part of the town with fire. The same night we went to sleep at a league's distance from the village; and at day-break, resuming our route, we fell in with the enemy, who at a distance began to utter loud cries, or shouts, as they are wont to do in war, which are certainly terrible to hear. We pursued them, and in our course reached a large and beautiful city called Guaticlan, which we found deserted by its inhabitants, where we lodged that night.

The next day we continued to advance, and arrived at another city called Tenainca, where we met with no resistance; and without stopping we passed on to another called Acapuzalco; all of them are on the lake. We did not remain in the latter, because I desired very much to reach another city which is near it, called Tacuba, in the vicinity of Temixtitan. When we had approached within a short distance of that city, we found it surrounded by ditches or canals, and the enemy close at hand; as soon as we saw them we and our allies attacked them vigorously, and entered the place, killing some and driving out others. As it was now almost evening, we did nothing more that night than to take lodgings in a house that was large enough to contain us all very conveniently.* At day-break our Indian friends began to pillage and burn the city, except the building in which we had lodged; and they were so diligent that

* The town of Tacuba now belongs to the cacique Don Josef Muteczuma, a descendant of the emperors; and the houses which are above referred to, were those of the emperor. This place in the Mexican is called Tlacupa, (or Tlacopan,) and was the capital of the kingdom of the Tecpanecans, and subsequently was subjected by Ahuir.—L.

nearly a quarter of it was consumed. They did this because when we were before driven out of Temixtitan, in passing through this place its inhabitants joined with those of Temixtitan in making cruel war upon us, and destroyed the lives of many Spaniards.

During the six days that we were in the city of Tacuba, there was not one in which we did not have many rencounters and skirmishes with the enemy. The Tlascallan captains and their men sent many challenges to the Mexicans, and they fought one another with great valor, exchanging words together, uttering threats and injurious expressions that were curious to hear; and during this time many of the enemy were constantly falling, without any loss on our side, although we several times passed into the streets and on the bridges of the city, where being strongly fortified they made a stout resistance. They often pretended to invite us to enter the city [of Mexico], saying, "Go in, go in, and enjoy yourselves;" and at another time they said to us, "Do you think there is now a second Muteczuma to do every thing you wish?" Whilst these speeches were passing, I came to a bridge which they had abandoned, and seeing them on the other side, I beckoned to our people to be silent; and the enemy, perceiving that I wished to speak to them, likewise commanded their people to be quiet. I then asked them, "Why they were so foolish as to seek their own ruin?" and "that if there was amongst them any principal chief from the city, he should make his appearance, as I wished to speak to him." They answered, "that the whole multitude of warriors that I saw there were chiefs, and that I might therefore say what I pleased." When they found I made no re-

ply, they began to load me with reproaches; at the same time some one of our men exclaimed, "Let them die of hunger, and let us not suffer them to leave the city in quest of food." They retorted, "that they were in no want, and that when they were they would eat us and the Tlascallans." One of them took some cakes of maize and reached it towards us, saying, "Take these and eat them, for we have an abundance besides;" and then began to utter loud cries, and to attack us.

As my visit to this city of Tacuba had been chiefly for the purpose of holding a parley with the Mexicans, and to ascertain their disposition; and as my presence there had advanced nothing, I determined at the end of six days to return to Tesaico, in order to hasten the putting together and completion of the brigantines on the land, and to launch them into the water. The day we set out on our return, we came to sleep at the city of Goatitan, of which mention is made above, and the enemy continually pursued us; our cavalry charged upon them from time to time, and took several prisoners. The next day we resumed our march, and when the enemy saw us returning, they ascribed it to fear, and great numbers of them rallied and pursued us. As soon as I perceived this, I ordered the foot to advance and continue the march without interruption, followed in their rear by five horse, while I should remain behind with twenty others, six of whom I directed to lie in ambush in one place, six more in another, and five in another, while I with the remaining three should occupy another; that when the enemy had passed us, supposing that we had all gone on together, on hearing the countersign, "*Santiago*," they should rush forward and attack them in their rear. Accordingly as soon as it was time,

we sallied forth and fell upon the enemy with our lances, pursuing them about two leagues, over ground as level as the palm of the hand, in very handsome style. Thus many of them perished beneath our hands and those of our Indian allies; so they desisted from pursuing us, and we continued our march until we overtook the main body. We slept that night at a pretty village called Aculman, two leagues from the city of Tesaico; and the next day resuming our route, we entered that city, where we were well received by the alguazil mayor, whom I had left in command, and by the whole people, who were much pleased with our arrival; since from the day we left there they had heard nothing of us, or of what had happened to us, which they were very desirous of knowing. The day after our return, the Tlascallans asked permission of me to go home, and they went away well satisfied, taking with them considerable spoil of the enemy.

Two days after our return to this city of Tezcuco, there came to me certain Indians, messengers from Chalco, who said they had been directed to inform me that the Mexicans had marched against them and designed to destroy them, and they desired me to send them succor, as they had asked on former occasions. I immediately despatched thither Gonzalo de Sandoval with twenty horse and three hundred foot, charging him to make great haste, and when arrived there to give all the aid in his power to those vassals of your Majesty and our allies. Having arrived at Chalco, he found many people assembled, both of that province and of Guajocingo and Guacachula, who were expecting him; and when he had directed them what to do, they departed and took the road to a village called Guastepeque, where

the Culuans had a garrison, and from whence they had done much injury to the people of Chalco. At a town on the route the enemy appeared in considerable force; but as our allies were numerous, and had besides the advantage of the Spanish horse and foot, they attacked them at once, and drove them from the fields, pursuing them with great slaughter. They took up their quarters for the night in the same town before reaching Guastepeque, and set out the next day. When they had arrived at Guastepeque, the Culuans began to attack the Spaniards, who in a short time put them to flight, and drove them with slaughter out of the place. The horsemen then dismounted in order to obtain forage for their horses and to get rest. While thus off their guard the enemy came upon them, approaching even to the place where they were reposing, uttering loud and fearful cries, throwing stones, clubs and arrows; the Spaniards seized their arms, and with our allies rushed in great haste upon the enemy, and again drove them from the place, pursuing them more than a league, and killing many of their number. They returned that night much fatigued to Guastepeque, where they rested two days.

At this time the alguazil mayor learned that in a town somewhat farther on, called Acapictla, there was a large force of the enemy; he determined to go there and discover whether they were inclined to peace. The town was strongly fortified,* and situated on an eminence, inaccessible to cavalry; and as soon as the Spaniards arrived there, the inhabitants without any delay commenced hostilities by throwing down stones upon the men; and although the alguazil mayor had with him

* As it is at this day, although it is buried in profound repose, like the adjacent country. In the time of Cortes a magnificent parochial church was built here.—L.

many of our allies, yet seeing the strength of the place, he did not dare to attack it, nor to approach the enemy. But when the alguazil mayor and the Spaniards saw this, they resolved to scale the heights of the town, or to perish in the attempt; and with the watchword "*Señor Santiago*,"* they began the ascent. It pleased God to give them such strength, that although the resistance was great on the part of the enemy, they succeeded in effecting an entrance into the place, but not without many of them being wounded. When our Indian allies followed, and the enemy were seen to yield, so great was the slaughter both at the hands of our people, and by the enemy throwing themselves from the heights of the town, that a small stream, which almost surrounds the town, was said by all who were there to have been for more than an hour so tinged with blood, that they could not drink it, although in consequence of the heat there was a great want of water for that purpose. Having thus brought matters to a conclusion, and at length reduced these two places to a state of peace, after punishing them well for refusing terms when first offered, the alguazil mayor returned with all his force to Tezcuco; and your Catholic Majesty may be assured that this was a most signal victory, in which the Spaniards showed their courageous spirit in a remarkable degree.

When the Mexicans and Temixtitans learned that the Spaniards and Chalconians had done so much injury to their people, they resolved to despatch a large force under certain captains against them; and as soon as the Chalconians were advised of this movement they sent in great haste to me for aid, and I immediately despatched the alguazil mayor with horse and foot, who

* This watchword was much used in the wars against the Moors.—L.

found on his arrival that the Culuans and Chalconians had already met in the field, and a brisk engagement had taken place between them, in which, thanks be to God, the Chalconians had come off victorious, having slain many of the enemy, and taken full forty of them prisoners, amongst whom was a Mexican captain with two other leading personages. The Chalconians delivered all the prisoners into the hands of the alguazil mayor, in order that he might deliver them to me; who accordingly sent some of them to me, and the rest he kept with himself, as for the better security of the Chalconians he remained with his whole force in a town of theirs on the frontiers of Mexico. As soon as his presence appeared to be no longer necessary he returned to Tezcuco, and brought with him the other prisoners they had delivered to him. About the same time we had many other rencounters with the Culuans; but to avoid prolixity I omit giving a particular account of them.

As the road from the city of Tezcuco to the town of Vera Cruz was secure for travellers, either going or coming, the inhabitants of that place had every day news of us, and we of them, which before the present time was not the case. They now sent me a messenger, together with a quantity of crossbows, arquebuses and powder, which afforded us the greatest satisfaction; and in two days after they sent another messenger by whom they advised me of the arrival at that port of three ships, containing a large number of men and horses, which they would immediately forward—a succor that God miraculously sent us at a time when greatly needed.

I sought always, most powerful Sire, by every possible means, to gain the friendship of the inhabitants of Temixtitan, both because they had done nothing to deserve

being exterminated, and to relieve ourselves after the toils of the past wars; but chiefly because I knew it would redound to the service of your Majesty. For this reason whenever I had any one belonging to the city in my power, I sent him back to advise and warn his countrymen to make peace. On Ash Wednesday, the twenty-seventh day of March, in the year 1521, I caused to be brought before me some of the principal men of Temixtitan, who had been made prisoners by the Chalconians, and said to them, that if any of their number desired, they might go to the city and speak in my behalf to its lords, asking them to desist from warring with me, and to become vassals of your Majesty, as they had already been, since I had no wish to destroy them, but on the contrary to be their friend. Although unwilling, from fear that by going with such a message they would be put to death, two of these prisoners consented to go, and requested me to give them a letter; for though they did not understand its contents, they knew that it was a customary thing amongst us, and that it would give them credit in the city. But by means of an interpreter I made them comprehend what was written in the letter, which was the same that I had told them. So they departed, and I ordered five horsemen to accompany them until they were out of danger.

On holy Saturday, the Chalconians and their other allies and friends sent to advise me that the Mexicans were about to invade their country, and showed me on a large white cloth a representation of all the towns that were to march against them, and the routes they would take; and they begged me by all means to send them succor. I told them that I would do so in four or five days, and that if in the mean time they saw any pressing

necessity, they should let me know it, and I would come to their relief. On the third day after Easter, they returned to beg me to send the succor as soon as possible, for the enemy were rapidly approaching them. I assured them that I would come to their assistance, and on the following Friday they should have twenty-five horse and three hundred foot.

On the preceding Thursday, messengers came to Tezcuco from the provinces of Tazapan, Mascalzingo, Nautan, and other cities in this vicinity, who informed me that they had come to acknowledge themselves vassals of your Majesty, and our allies, for they had never killed any Spaniards, nor risen against your Majesty; and they brought with them a quantity of cotton cloth as a present. I thanked them, and promised if they were faithful to treat them well; and so they returned contented.

The Friday following, the fifth of April, 1521, I left the city of Tezcuco with thirty horse and three hundred foot, fully equipped; and there remained in the city twenty horse and three hundred foot, under the command of Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor. More than twenty thousand Tezcucans accompanied me, and according to the plan of our march, we went to sleep at a village of Chalco, called Talmanalco, where we were well received and lodged. At this place, as it is well fortified, the Chalconians after they had become our allies always kept a garrison, as it is on the frontiers of Culua. The next day we reached Chalco, at nine o'clock in the day, but did not remain except to inform the caciques of my intention to march once around the lakes, because I believed that when this expedition was completed, I should find the thirteen brigantines finished,

and ready to be launched into the water—a matter of vast importance. Accordingly, as I had told the Chalconians, we resumed the march that day at evening, and arrived at a village of theirs, where we were joined by more than forty thousand men of war, our allies, and took up our quarters for the night. As I was informed by the inhabitants of this village that the enemy were expecting me in the field, I ordered all the men to be in readiness at the dawn of day. The next morning, having heard mass, we began our march; I led the van with twenty horse, ten remaining in the rear, and as in this manner we passed through a defile between the steep sierras, at two P. M. we reached a very lofty and rough acclivity, on the summit of which were many women and children, and the sides were covered with men of war. They immediately began to sound the alarm, and making many signals with smoke, discharged their slings upon us, and also a shower of stones, arrows, and darts; so that in approaching the place we received much injury. Although we saw that the enemy dared not to wait for us in the field, it appeared to me that it would look like cowardice to go forward without giving them something they would not relish, although such was the plan of our march; and in order that our friends might not suppose we did this from want of courage, I began to take a look round the hill, which was about a league in circuit. I found it so well defended, that to think of gaining it seemed like madness, although I could do so by investing it, and compelling the enemy to yield from mere want; but I could not spare the time necessary for this purpose.

Being thus somewhat perplexed, I at length resolved to scale the declivity in three places, which I had noted, and I ordered Cristobal Corral an ensign of sixty foot-

men, (who always accompanied me,) to go forward and ascend the roughest place, and that a number of musketeers and archers should follow him; Juan Rodriguez, of Villa Fuerte, and Francisco Verdugo, captains, with their men, and some of the archers and musketeers, to ascend another place; and Pedro Dircio and Andres de Monjaraz, captains, to attempt the other point with a few musketeers and archers; and that when they heard a musket discharged, they should all resolve to ascend, and purchase victory or death. Immediately, on the discharge of a musket, they began the ascent, and succeeded in depriving the enemy of two bends in the mountain, but were unable to get any farther, finding it impossible to hold on with their hands and feet on account of the unparalleled roughness and steepness of the declivity. The enemy hurled down rocks from the summit with their hands, and these rolling until broken into fragments which scattered in every direction, did infinite mischief; and so violent were these assaults of the enemy, that two Spaniards were killed, and more than twenty wounded. In short, they were unable by any means to pass beyond where they were. Seeing that it was impossible to accomplish more than had been already done, and that great numbers of the enemy were coming to the relief of those on the mountain, the whole country being full of them, I ordered the captains to return, and when they had descended, our horse made a charge upon the enemy on the plain, killing many with their lances; after which we pursued them for more than an hour and a half. As there were great numbers of the enemy, the horse sallied forth first to one side, and then the other, and after they had come in from the pursuit, I was informed by some of them that they had gone more than a league from where

we were, and had seen another hill with many people upon it, but that it was not so defensible; and that on the plain surrounding it there was a large population, and two things existed there that the other wanted; one was water, which had not until then been found; the other was, that the hill being of so great an extent could not offer as great facilities for resistance, and the people on it could be taken without danger. It was with feelings sad enough that we left this place without achieving a victory, and went to lodge that night near the other eminence; and we marched with great labor and exhaustion, for we had not found water, nor drank any the whole day, neither ourselves nor our horses. In this condition we were compelled to pass the night amidst the noises made by the enemy with kettle-drums, horns, and horrid outcries.

As soon as it was day-light, several of the captains and myself began to reconnoitre the hill, which appeared to us to be not less formidable than the other; but there were two eminences higher than the main one, and not so hard to ascend, on which was a considerable force to defend them. The captains and I, with other hidalgos who were there, took our bucklers and went on foot towards the hill, (as the horses had been sent to be watered a league off,) for the purpose of seeing the strength of the place, and where to make an attack; and the people, when they saw us going, although we had said nothing to them, voluntarily followed us. When we reached the foot of the hill, those who were on the heights supposed that I would make an attack on the middle of the elevation, and descended to aid their own people. As soon as I observed this movement, and that by taking possession of these two eminences much

injury could be done to them with little noise, I ordered a captain to ascend immediately with his men, and occupy one of the higher elevations which they had left, and he did so. I with the rest of the party began to ascend the hill itself, on which was the principal force of the enemy; and it pleased God that I should gain one level on it, and we placed ourselves at a height that almost equalled that from whence they fought; which it appeared impossible to reach, at least without infinite danger. Already a captain had planted his flag on the loftiest part of the hill, from which he began to discharge his muskets and cross-bows on the enemy. As soon as they saw the injury they were likely to receive, and considered what would be their fate, they made a signal of their willingness to surrender, and laid their arms on the ground. As my policy has always been to make these people understand that we do not seek to injure them, however guilty they may have been, but desire them to become vassals of your Majesty; and as they are a people of so great intelligence that they comprehend and know every thing, I gave orders to do them no harm; and when they came to speak to me I received them well. When they saw how kindly I treated them, they communicated the fact to the people on the other hill, who, although they had come off victorious, determined to offer themselves for vassals of your Majesty, and came to ask pardon of me for the past.

I was two days amongst the people dwelling about the mountain, from whence I sent the wounded to Tesaico, and departed myself; at ten o'clock in the day we arrived at Guastepeque, of which mention is made above, where we all lodged in a garden-house of the cacique. This garden is the largest, most beautiful and refreshing that

I ever beheld; it is two leagues in circuit, and through the middle of it flows a fine stream of water; at intervals of about two bow-shots are houses with beds of flowers, and numerous trees bearing various fruits, together with a profusion of herbs and odoriferous plants; so that the beauty and extent of the whole garden are worthy of the greatest admiration. That day we reposed in it, and the people did all they could to please and serve us. The next day we set out, and at eight o'clock we arrived at a goodly town called Yautepeque, where a great number of the enemy were awaiting our arrival. On our coming it seemed as if they wished to make us some signal of peace, either on account of their fears, or to deceive us. But immediately, without more ado, they began to fly, abandoning the place; and I did not care to remain in it, but with thirty horse we pursued them two leagues until we shut them up in another place called Gilutepeque, when we attacked them with lances, and slew many of them. In this town we found the people very much off their guard, because we got there before their scouts. Some of them were slain, and many women and young persons were taken prisoners; all the rest fled. I remained there two days, believing that the cacique would acknowledge himself a vassal of your Majesty; but as he never came, when I left the town I set fire to it. Before, however, I had left it, certain persons came from the former place, called Yactepeque, and asked me to pardon them, saying that they desired to become vassals of your Majesty. I received them favorably, because they had already been sufficiently punished.

On the same day that I departed, at nine o'clock in the morning, I came in sight of a very strong town, called

Coadnabaced, in which was a large force of the enemy.* The town was well defended by its situation, being surrounded by mountains and ravines, some of the latter fifty or sixty feet in depth; and no horsemen could enter the place except by two ways, which were then unknown to us, and even these rendered it necessary to make a circuit of more than a league and a half to find the entrance. There were, indeed, bridges of wood that led into the town, but these were raised, and were so strong and so well secured that although we had been ten times as numerous, we could not have made use of them. As we advanced towards the place, the enemy shot a great number of arrows, darts, and stones at us; and while we were deliberating what course to take, a Tlascallan crossed over without being observed by them, by a very dangerous passage. When the enemy suddenly discovered him, they imagined that the Spaniards had effected an entrance at that point, and alarmed they blindly fled, pursued by the Indians and three or four young persons, servants of mine, with two others belonging to a captain's command, who, when they saw the Indian pass over, had followed him and crossed to the other side. In the mean time I began to lead the way with the cavalry to the mountain to find an entrance to the town, while the Indians, our enemies, were constantly shooting darts and arrows at us, there being only a ravine, like a ditch, between them and us.† While they were thus engaged, the five Spaniards that had crossed over, whom they had not seen, suddenly came upon their rear, and began to

* Cuernabaca, before called Cuaunahuac, is a very pleasant and very strong place; where are still preserved the houses of Cortes, used as a fortress, together with other memorials of the conquest.—L.

† This ravine yet exists, and the description of Cortes still holds true.—L.

cut and slash at them, taking them completely by surprise; for they had no idea that an attack could possibly come from that quarter, not knowing that their people had fled from the place where the Spaniards and the Indian had crossed; they were thus struck with terror, and being afraid to resist, the Spanish soldiers killed a number of them, until seeing how they had been deceived, they began to fly. Our infantry had now entered the town, and commenced setting fire to it, while the enemy were forsaking it, taking refuge in the mountain, although many of them perished, being pursued by our horse and slain in great numbers. It was about midday when we found where we could enter the city, and we took some repose in the houses of a garden, although we found them nearly all burned. Towards evening, the cacique and some of the other nobles, seeing that it was useless to attempt to defend even so strong a place, and fearing that we should pursue them into the mountain and destroy them, determined to come and acknowledge themselves vassals of your Majesty; and I received them as such, and they promised me to be henceforth forever our friends. These Indians and others who came to give themselves up as vassals of your Majesty, after the burning and destruction of their houses and haciendas, told us that the reason of their coming in so late was, that they thought their offences would be atoned for more effectually if they suffered first some injury, and that when this was done, we should have no unfriendly feelings towards them.

We slept that night in the town, and in the morning pursued our route through a country of pine trees, uninhabited, and destitute of water; we passed on a road leading through a narrow mountain defile, suffering much

from fatigue and want of drink; many of the Indians even, who accompanied us, perishing with thirst. Seven leagues from that place we spent the night in camp. At dawn of day we resumed our route, and came in sight of a great city called Suchimilco, built on the fresh water lake. As the inhabitants were apprised of our coming, they had digged many ditches and canals, and raised the bridges at all the entrances into the city, which is three or four leagues distant from Temixtitan. The population was large and intelligent, and resolved to defend themselves or die in the attempt. As soon as we had arrived there, having collected our whole force and disposed it in the best manner, I dismounted from my horse and proceeded with several of the infantry towards a ditch they had made, on the other side of which were posted a considerable number of the enemy. When the engagement commenced, they suffered much loss from the crossbows and musketry, and fled in confusion, while the Spaniards threw themselves into the water and passing on reached *terra firma*. In the half hour during which the fighting lasted, we took the principal part of the city, and the enemy retreating through the streets of water fought in their canoes till night. Some of them sued for peace, and others continued fighting; and they so often asked for a cessation of hostilities, that we came to the conclusion that it was done to enable them to carry away their goods in safety, or to gain time for the arrival of succors from Mexico and Temixtitan.

This day two Spaniards were killed, who having left the ranks for the purpose of plunder found themselves beyond the reach of assistance from the rest of the army. In the evening the enemy endeavored to devise some

way to cut us off, so that we could not leave this city without the loss of our lives. Having assembled a large force, they determined to attack us in that quarter of the city where we had entered, and seeing them advance with so much ardor and activity, we were astonished, and taking six of the cavalry that were more at hand than the rest, I charged upon the midst of them. They fled from fear of the horses, and we thus passed out of the city behind them, slaying many, although we were in great danger; some of them discovering so much courage as to wait for the advance of the cavalry, being armed with sword and buckler. When we had become in this manner mixed up with the enemy in great confusion, the horse on which I rode fell from excessive fatigue, and some of them seeing me on foot, rushed upon me, while I defended myself with my lance; but an Indian of Tlascala, as soon as he saw my situation, ran to my assistance, and he and one of my servants who also soon came up aided me in raising my horse. The Spaniards had now reached this quarter, and the enemy abandoned the field; while I, with other horsemen who arrived, being excessively fatigued, returned to the city. Although it was now almost night, and there was need of repose, I ordered all the bridges that had been raised, under which the water flowed, to be dammed up with stone and brick, so that the horsemen could enter and leave the city without any noise; and I did not leave the ground until all the bad places were repaired. After using much precaution, and setting many guards, we retired for the night.

The next day, when the inhabitants of the province of Mexico and Temixtitan learned that we were in Suchimilco, they determined to come in great strength by

water and by land, to surround us, believing that we could not escape from their hands. I ascended a tower containing their idols, for the purpose of seeing in what manner they would approach, and in what quarter they would attack us, in order to take proper measures to meet them. When all our preparations were completed, there arrived by water a great fleet of canoes, exceeding two thousand in number, as I believe; and in them came more than twelve thousand warriors; at the same time the whole country was covered with the multitudes that poured in by land. The leaders of the advance troops bore in their hands swords that had been taken from our people, and calling out the names of their provinces, cried, "*Mexico, Mexico—Temixtitan, Temixtitan;*" at the same time they showered reproaches upon us, and threatened to slay us with the swords that they had taken from us on a former occasion in the city of Temixtitan. After I had assigned each captain his post, finding that there were great numbers of the enemy on *terra firma*, I proceeded against them with twenty horse and five hundred Tlascallans, dividing my force into three parts; and I ordered that when they had dispersed the enemy, they should rendezvous at the foot of a hill, half a league distant from there, because many of the enemy were at that point. When we had divided, each squadron pursued the enemy under its own leader; and after having routed them and with lances killed many, we sought the rendezvous at the base of the hill; and I ordered several foot soldiers, servants of mine, who were very daring, to endeavor to ascend the steepest part of the hill. I then with the horse went round to the rear, where it was more level, and attacked the enemy in the centre; and when they saw the Spaniards ascend the

hill, they threw down their swords, thinking to find safety in flight, but they encountered our party of fifteen horse, when we and the Tlascallans made an attack upon them. In this way there perished in a short time more than five hundred of the enemy; all the rest escaped and took refuge in the mountains. The other six horsemen happened to take a wide and level road, from which they hurled their darts at the enemy; and at half a league from Suchimilco they fell upon a squadron of very handsome troops, who were coming to the relief of their countrymen, and defeated them, slaying some with their lances.

It was now ten o'clock in the day, when all the cavalry having come together, we returned to Suchimilco, and at the entrance of the town I found many Spaniards, who were anxiously desiring our return, and to know what success we had met with; and they informed me that they had been hotly engaged, and had labored hard to drive out the enemy, of whom they had killed great numbers. They gave me two of our swords, which they had retaken, and said that the archers had used up their arrows, and could obtain no more. While listening to this account, before we had dismounted, a large squadron of the enemy with loud cries appeared on a wide causeway, and we immediately rushed upon them, causing them to throw themselves into the water which was on both sides of the causeway. Thus we put them to route, and collecting our people together, we returned much exhausted to the city, where I ordered every thing to be burnt except the house in which we lodged. We had thus been three days in the city, continually engaged in fighting; and at length departed, leaving it wholly destroyed and razed to the ground. It was a spectacle worth be-

holding, as there were many houses and towers for idols, built of stone and lime; but to avoid prolixity, I forbear to particularize other remarkable things connected with this city.

The day on which I left this place I went out to a public square, which was connected with the city by the main land, where the inhabitants pursued their traffic; and I ordered ten of the cavalry to advance to the front, ten others to be stationed in the centre of the infantry, and the remaining ten to fall into the rear. When the Suchimilcans saw that we were beginning to move away, thinking that it was from fear, they rushed upon our rear with loud cries; and the ten horsemen and myself returned to attack them, and pursued them until they plunged into the water; by this means they were taught to let us alone, and we continued our route. At ten o'clock in the day we arrived at the city of Cuyocan, two leagues from Suchimilco, and about the same distance from the cities of Temixtitan, Culuacan, Uchilubusco, (Churubusco,) Iztapalapa, Cuitaguaca, and Mizqueque, all of which are situated on the water. The most distant of these is one and a half leagues, which we found deserted by the inhabitants, and we took our quarters in the house of the cacique, where we remained two days. As when the brigantines were completed I should have occasion to place them round Temixtitan, I wished first to see the disposition of that city, its entrances and outlets, and where the Spaniards could make an attack, or be likely to receive one. The day after I arrived, I took five horse and two hundred foot, and went towards the lake, which is very near, by means of a causeway that leads into the city of Temixtitan, when we beheld a great number of canoes on the water,

and in them a countless multitude of warriors. We reached an entrenchment, which the enemy had thrown up on the causeway, against which the infantry commenced an attack; and although it was very strong, and stoutly defended, ten Spaniards being wounded, we at length carried it, and killed many of the enemy, although the archers and musketeers were left without arrows and powder. From this place we saw how the causeway passes straight over the water until it reaches Temixtitan, a full league and a half; and both this, and the other which goes to Iztapalapa, were covered with an innumerable crowd of people. When I had considered well whatever was necessary to be seen, as we should be compelled to have a garrison of foot and horse in this city, I collected our force together and returned to the town, burning the houses and the towers of the idols.

The next day we left this city for Tacuba, two leagues distant, and arrived at nine in the day, throwing our lances on one side and the other, as the enemy issued from the lake to attack the Indians who were transporting our equipage; and finding themselves deceived they suffered us to proceed in peace. Since, as I have already stated, my principal intention was to endeavor to make the circuit of all the lakes in order to understand and obtain a better knowledge of the country, and also to succor some of our allies, I did not care to stop at Tacuba. But when the Mexicans (whose city is very near that place, and even extends so far as to reach the main land at Tacuba) saw us pass by, they recovered their spirits, and with great boldness made an attack upon our baggage; and when our horse came up in good order, it being all level ground, we gave a good account of the enemy, without ourselves incurring any

danger. As we were dashing from one side to the other, several youths in my service followed me in my movements; but at one time two of them neglected to do so, and found themselves so situated that they could not escape falling into the hands of the enemy, who, without doubt, would put them to a cruel death, as they are wont to do. My feelings on this occasion God only knows, on account of their being Christians, and men of valor, who had performed good service for your Majesty in this war.

Leaving this city, we began to pursue our route through other villages in the vicinity, and drew near the enemy, who, I ascertained, had taken the young men prisoners. In order to revenge their death, and because the enemy followed us with terrible outcries, I with twenty horse placed myself behind some houses in ambush; and when the Indians saw the other ten horse and all the people and baggage going on before, they immediately pursued them by a road that was wide and level, without fear. As soon as we saw them pass, I gave the watchword "*the Apostle St. James*," when we rushed upon them with great violence. And before they had thrown themselves into the canals near by, we had slain more than a hundred of their principal men, and they no longer cared to follow us. This day we went to sleep two leagues in advance, at the city of Coatinchan, very much wearied and wet, for it had rained much that night, and we found the place deserted. The next day we resumed our march, casting our lances from time to time at some Indians who came forth to greet us with outcries; and we went to sleep at a village called Gilotepeque, which we also found deserted. The next day, at twelve o'clock, we arrived at a city called Aculman,

which is in the seignory of the city of Tezcuco, where we went to lodge that night, and were well received by the Spaniards, who congratulated us on our arrival and safety; for since I had departed from them, they had known nothing of me till the day that we arrived. They had had many suspicions in the city, and the inhabitants of the city had told them every day that the Mexicans would attack them while I was gone. Thus was concluded, by the aid of God, this expedition; it was a great enterprise, in which your Majesty received much service in various ways, as I shall hereafter relate.

At the time, most powerful and invincible Sire, when I was in the city of Temixtitan, soon after my first arrival, I made provision, as I informed your Majesty in my former relation, that in two or three provinces prepared for this purpose, there should be established for your Majesty's benefit certain farm-houses where the cultivation of the soil and other things suited to the nature of the country should be attended to. To one of these provinces, called Chinantla,* I sent two Spaniards; this province was not subject to the Culuans. In the others, which existed at the time they made war on me in the city of Temixtitan, those persons who had charge of the plantations were slain, and the establishments robbed of all they contained, being of considerable value according to the estimation of the country. Almost a year passed without my hearing any thing of the Spaniards at Chinantla; since all those provinces having rebelled against us, neither could they hear from us, nor we from them. The native

* Chinantla is towards Vera Cruz, more nearly opposite than that city to the island of Sacrificios; to this province was sent Hernando Barrientos, where he was ordered by Cortes to fabricate lances larger and stronger than the common kind; and on account of the black flints with which they pointed the lances, the place was called Chinanthla.—L.

inhabitants of the province of Chinantla, being vassals of your Majesty and enemies of the Culuans, told these Christians by no means to depart out of their land, because the Culuans had made war upon us, and they believed that few or none of our people survived. So these two Spaniards remained in that country, and the natives made one of them, who was young and a soldier, their captain; and at that time he went with them to make war on their enemies, and several times he and the people of Chinantla came off victorious. When afterwards it pleased God that we should recover our position and vanquish our enemies, who had defeated us, and driven us from Temixtitan, the people of Chinantla informed these Christians that they knew there were some Spaniards in the province of Tepeaca, and if they wished to obtain certain information, they would risk two Indians, although they had to pass through much of their enemies' country; but they should go by night, and out of the travelled road, until they reached Tepeaca. By these two Indians one of the Spaniards, who was superior to the other, sent a letter, the tenor of which was as follows :—

"Noble Sirs,—I have written two or three letters to your honors, and I know not whether they reached you or not; and since I have received no answer to them, I also regard it as doubtful whether I shall receive one to this. Be it known to you, sirs, that all the natives of the land of Culua have risen, and several times visited us with war; but always, praised be our Lord, we have come off conquerors. And with the people of Tuxtepeque, on account of their connexion with Culua, we every day had hostilities. Those who are in the service of his

Highness and his vassals are seven towns of the Tenez ;* and Nicolas and I are always in Chinantla, which is the chief of them. I much desire to know where the captain is, that I may be able to write to him and inform him of things here. If by chance you should write me where he is, please to send twenty or thirty Spaniards to escort me to him, with two of the principal people of this place, who desire to see and converse with him ; and it would be well for them to come now, since as it is now time to gather the cacao, the Culuans hinder it by their wars. May our Lord protect the persons of your honors according to your desire. From Chinantla, on I know not what day of April, 1521. My service to your honors.

HERNANDO DE BARRIENTOS."†

When the two Indians arrived in the province of Tepeaca with this letter, the captain I had left there in command of a Spanish force sent it immediately to me at Tezcuco ; and we all felt great satisfaction in receiving it, for although we had placed great confidence in the friendship of the people of Chinantla, we feared that if they confederated with the Culuans, they would have put to death the two Spaniards. I immediately wrote to them, giving an account of what had passed, and encouraging them to hope that although they were surrounded on all sides by the enemy, soon, if it pleased God, they would find themselves free, and able to go and come in safety.

After having made the circuit of the lakes, and acquired

* These towns are in the province of Tabasco.—L.

† This Hernando Barrientos is the ancestor of the noble family of the Barrientos of Mexico.—L.

much information that might be of use in investing the city of Mexico by land and water, I returned to Tezcuco, where I provided myself to the best of my ability with men and arms, and hastened the completion of the brigantines and a trench by which they were to be floated to the lake. This trench had been commenced directly after the arrival of the timber and planks composing the brigantines, and formed a canal extending from near our quarters until it discharged into the lake. The distance from the place where the brigantines were put together and the head of the canal to the lake, is full half a league; and in this work fifty days were consumed, and more than 8000 persons employed each day, natives of the province of Aculuacan and Tezcuco. The canal was about twelve feet in depth, and as many more in breadth, and was protected by a coating and a fence or paling throughout its whole length, so that the water that flowed in it was conveyed without loss to the lake. Thus the brigantines were able to be removed to the lake unattended by danger or labor; a grand work certainly, and worthy of admiration.*

* A plan of the city and lakes of Mexico will be found at the end of the fifth chapter of this Letter.

CHAPTER III.

As soon as the brigantines were completed and launched into the canal, on the twenty-eighth of April in that year, I reviewed our whole force, and found it to consist of eighty-six horse, one hundred and eighteen archers and musketeers, seven hundred and more foot, armed with sword and buckler, together with three heavy iron cannon, fifteen small copper field-pieces, and ten hundred weight of powder. Having finished the review, I charged and enjoined much on the Spaniards to observe and comply with the orders I should give them in conducting the war with as great strictness as possible; and that they should take fresh courage and spirits, since they saw that our lord was leading us to victory over our enemies; for they knew that when we entered Tezcuco, we had not brought more than forty horse, and that God had succored us beyond our expectations, ships having arrived with horses, men, and arms, as they had seen; and that they should consider especially, that we were fighting in behalf and for the spread of our faith, and to reduce to your Majesty's service the lands and provinces that had rebelled; a consideration which should inspire them with courage and zeal to conquer or die. They all answered and showed an entire willingness and alacrity in complying with my wishes; and the day of the review was passed by us with great enjoyment and a desire to commence the siege and end the war on which depended the peace or disquiet of these parts.

The next day I sent messengers to the provinces of Tascaltecal, Guajocingo, and Churultecal, to inform them that the brigantines were finished, and that I and our whole force were in readiness to take up the line of march for the investment of the great city of Temixtitan. I therefore desired, as they had been advised by me, and should now have their people prepared, that with the largest number they could raise, and well armed, they should depart and come to Tezcuco, where I would wait for them ten days, and that on no account could I exceed that time, as it would greatly disconcert our plans. When the messengers arrived, the inhabitants of those provinces were already prepared, and quite eager to engage with the Culuans; those of Guajocingo and Churultecal came by the way of Chalco, as they were ordered by me, because it was nearer for them to take part in the siege from that quarter. The Tlascallan captains with all their people, in fine condition and well armed, arrived at Tezcuco five or six days before Whitsunday, which was the time I had designated for them; and as I knew they would come on that day I went forth to receive them with lively satisfaction; and they arrived with the greatest possible alacrity and good order. According to the return made to us by the captains, there were fifty thousand warriors, who were well received by us and provided with quarters.

The second day in Whitsun week I ordered all the infantry and cavalry to parade on the public square of the city of Tezcuco, for the purpose of making a disposition of the troops, and assigning to the captains their respective commands in three divisions, to be stationed in the three cities around Mexico. One division I assigned to Pedro de Alvarado, and gave him thirty horse, eighteen

archers and musketeers, and one hundred and fifty infantry, armed with sword and buckler, together with more than twenty-five thousand warriors of Tlascala; these were to take up a position in the city of Tacuba.

The next division I assigned to Cristobal Olid, to whom I gave thirty-three horse, eighteen archers and musketeers, and one hundred and sixty infantry with sword and buckler, together with more than twenty thousand warriors of our allies. This division was to occupy the city of Cuyoacan.

Of the third division I made Gonzalo de Sandoval (the alguazil mayor) captain, and assigned him twenty-four horse, four musketeers, thirteen archers, and one hundred and fifty infantry with sword and buckler, fifty of these being a select corps of young men that I brought in my company, besides the people of Guajocingo, Churultecal and Chalco, more than thirty thousand men in all. This division was destined for the city of Iztapalapa, which was to be destroyed; after which it was to pass over a causeway on the lake under cover of the brigantines, and unite with the division at Cuyoacan, when I should have entered the lake with the brigantines. The alguazil mayor was allowed to take his position wherever it seemed to him most advantageous.

For the thirteen brigantines with which I was to enter the lake I left three hundred men, most of whom were seamen, well skilled in their profession; each brigantine carrying twenty-five Spaniards, and each having its captain and commissary, together with six archers and musketeers.

The orders above mentioned having been communicated, the two captains who were assigned to the cities of Tacuba and Cuyoacan, after receiving instructions as

to what they were to do, departed from Tezcuco on the tenth of May, and took up their quarters for the night two leagues and a half from there at the fine village of Aculman. The same day I ascertained there had been some difference between the captains on the subject of quarters, and I took means at once the same night to remedy it, and make peace between them; and I sent a person on this errand, who reproved them and brought about a reconciliation. The next morning they left that place, and proceeded to another village called Jilotepeque, [Juitepec,] which they found deserted, as it was in the enemy's country. The next day they pursued their route according to their orders, and reached the city of Guatitlan, of which I have before made mention to your Majesty, which they also found abandoned by its inhabitants. The same day they passed through two other cities and villages, which were also deserted. At the hour of vespers they entered Tacuba, and finding no inhabitants, took up their quarters in the houses of the Cacique, which are very spacious and handsome; and although it was evening, the Tlascallans paid a visit to the entrance of two causeways leading to the city of Temixtitan, and fought two or three hours gallantly against the troops of the city, until the night separated them, when they returned in safety to Tacuba.

The next morning the two captains determined, as I had ordered them, to cut off the fresh water that is carried by pipes into the city of Temixtitan; and one of them with twenty horse and several musketeers and bowmen proceeded to the head of the aqueduct, which is a quarter of a league distant, and cut and broke the pipes, that were composed of wood, stone and mortar, and fought resolutely with the people of the city, who de-

fended the aqueduct by land and water; they finally routed the enemy, and completed their purpose by stopping the course of the fresh water from which the city was supplied—a very politic movement.

The same day the captains put in order several dangerous passes, bridges, and canals, that were round the lake, so that the horsemen could move freely from one part to the other. While this was doing, which caused a delay of three or four days, they had many rencounters with the citizens, in which some of the Spaniards were wounded and many of the enemy killed; several dikes and bridges were taken; and speeches and challenges were exchanged between the citizens and the Tlascallans, which were well worthy of notice. Captain Cristobal Dolid then departed with the division of the army that had been assigned to the city of Cuyoacan, two leagues from Tacuba; and Captain Pedro de Alvarado, was left with his division at Tacuba, where every day he was engaged in skirmishes and battles with the Indians. The same day that Cristobal Dolid set out for Cuyoacan, he and his men reached that place at ten o'clock, and took up their quarters in the houses of the cacique, the city being deserted by the inhabitants. The next morning they paid a visit to the causeway that leads into Temixtitan, with about twenty horse and several archers, and six or seven thousand Tlascallans; when they found the inhabitants well prepared, the causeway broken up, and many dikes erected as defences. They engaged with the enemy, and the archers wounded and killed several of their number. These visits were repeated for six or seven days, during each of which several encounters and skirmishes took place. On one night, about midnight, there came certain scouts from the city, making loud

shoutings about our quarters, when the Spanish sentinels called "*to arms*;" the men rushed forth, but found none of the enemy, the shoutings that had caused the alarm being heard from a distance. As our force was divided into so many parts, these two divisions desired my arrival with the brigantines as their only safety; and with this hope they waited some few days until I arrived, as I shall hereafter relate. During those six days the two divisions met in the course of the day, as they were near one another, and the cavalry scoured the country, always destroying with their lances many of the enemy; they also collected from the neighboring heights a large quantity of maize, of which bread is made, the principal food of the people in this region, and much superior to that of the islands.

In the preceding chapters I stated that I remained at Tesaico with three hundred men and the thirteen brigantines; as soon as I ascertained that the divisions of the army had reached their positions, I embarked and took a look at the city, doing some injury to the canoes. Although I was very desirous of being upon the land for the purpose of directing the movements of the army, yet as the captains were persons who could be safely entrusted with the business committed to them, and the charge of the brigantines was one of much importance, and required great concert of action and care, I determined to embark in them, the greatest advantage as well as risk being likely to occur by water; notwithstanding I was formally requested by the principal persons with me to join the divisions, as in their opinion most exposed to danger. The next day after the feast of Corpus Christi, [the Ascension,] Friday, at dawn of day, I despatched Gonzalo de Sandoval with his division from

Tesaico, in a direct course to the city of Iztapalapa, six short leagues distant; at a little past noon they arrived there, and immediately began to set fire to the city and attack the inhabitants. As soon as they saw the large force under the command of the alguazil mayor, (for he had with him 35 or 40,000 men of our allies,) the people took refuge in their canoes on the lake. The alguazil mayor, with his whole force, took up his quarters in that city, and remained there a day, waiting my orders and watching my movements.

After I had despatched the alguazil mayor, I immediately went on board the brigantines, and by the aid of sails and oars we took our departure; and while the alguazil mayor was engaged in fighting and setting fire to the city of Iztapalapa, we arrived in sight of a large and strongly fortified hill near that city, occupying an insulated situation in the lake; there were many people on it, as well of those dwelling round the lake, as from Temixtitan; for they knew well that the first encounter would be with the people of Iztapalapa, and they were there to defend themselves, and if possible to attack us. As soon as they saw our fleet approach, they began to shout and make great smokes as a signal to inform all the cities of the lakes of our coming, that they might be in readiness to meet us. Although my plan was to attack the part of the city of Iztapalapa that was situated on the water, we turned against this hill, and I leaped upon it with one hundred and fifty men. It was very steep and high, and it was with much difficulty that we began to ascend it; and we took by storm the entrenchments which they had raised on its summit for their defence. We came upon them in such a manner that not one of them escaped except the women and children; and in

this combat twenty-five Spaniards were wounded, but a most brilliant victory was obtained.

As the people of Iztapalapa had made signals of smoke from the towers of their idols, situated on a very lofty elevation very near the city, the Mexicans and inhabitants of the other cities on the lakes knew that I was entering the lake with the brigantines; and all at once an immense fleet of canoes was assembled to attack us, and discover what sort of things the brigantines were; so far as we could judge they exceeded five hundred in number. As soon as I saw that they were bending their course directly towards us, I with the men who had landed on the hill went on board in much haste, and I ordered the commanders of the brigantines by no means to move, since the canoes were determined to attack us, and would believe that from fear we did not venture out to meet them; so in great force the enemy began to direct their course towards us. But when within about two bow-shots they halted and remained quiet; and in the mean time, while I was anxious that the first encounter we had with them should be marked by a signal victory, and inspire them with great dread of the brigantines, which were the key of the whole war, as both the enemy and ourselves would suffer most by water—it pleased our Lord that while we were looking at one another, a wind arose from the land favorable to an attack upon them, and I instantly gave orders to the commanders to break through the fleet of canoes, and pursue them until they took refuge in the city of Temixtitan. As the wind was fair, we bore down upon the midst of them, and although they fled as fast as possible, we broke an immense number of canoes, and destroyed many of the enemy in a style worthy of admiration. In the chase we followed

them full three long leagues, till they were locked up amongst the houses of the city; and thus it pleased our Lord to grant us a greater and more complete victory than we had ventured to ask or desire.

The division of the army posted at Cuyoacan was better able than that stationed in the city of Tacuba to see the movements of the brigantines; and when they espied the thirteen sail upon the lake, and observed the rapidity with which we moved, and that we dispersed all the canoes of the enemy, it was to them, as they afterwards assured me, the most gratifying spectacle, as well as the most desirable one, in the world. I have already stated that both divisions were extremely anxious for my arrival, and with good reason, for they were in the midst of a vast multitude of the enemy; but it pleased our Lord to raise the courage of our troops, and weaken that of the enemy, so that they were unable to summon resolution enough to attack our camp; which if they had done the Spaniards could not fail to have received great injury, though they were always well prepared, and resolved to conquer or die, since they were cut off from all succor save that which they hoped from God. So when the division at Cuyoacan discovered us in pursuit of the canoes, the greater part of the horse and foot that were there took up the line of march for the city of Temixtitan, and bravely engaged with the Indians on the causeway ;* they gained the trenches that had been made by the enemy, took them, and passed horse and foot over many bridges that they had abandoned, being favored in their movements by the brigantines, which approached near to the causeway. The

* On the causeway of La Piedad, which leads to Cuyoacan, there are at this day eight or nine bridges.—L.

Indians of Tlascala, our allies, and the Spaniards pursued the enemy, made great havoc amongst them and cast them into the water on the side of the causeway opposite that approached by the brigantines. In this manner they proceeded victoriously more than a long league on the causeway, until they reached the spot where I had hove to with the brigantines, as I shall hereafter relate.

We proceeded with the brigantines full three leagues in chase of the canoes; of which those that escaped us took refuge amongst the houses of the city, and as it was after vespers, I ordered the vessels to be called in, and sailed with them to the causeway, where I resolved to land with thirty men to take two small towers of idols, that were enclosed by a low wall of stone and mortar; and when we had landed, the enemy fought very spiritedly in defence of the towers, which at length after a long and perilous struggle we succeeded in taking. I then immediately caused three heavy iron pieces of ordnance which I had brought with me, to be mounted on the causeway. As the rest of the causeway as far as the city, a distance of half a league, was covered with crowds of the enemy, and both sides of it thronged with canoes full of warriors, I caused one of the guns to be levelled, which raked the causeway, making great havoc amongst them. Owing to the carelessness of the gunner at the place where we fired, all the powder we had there was burnt; the quantity, however, was not large. I immediately sent the same night a brigantine to Iztapalapa, where the alguazil mayor was, about two leagues off, to bring all the powder he had. Although it had been my intention at first, as soon as I embarked in the brigantines, to go to Cuyoacan, and place it in a strong

condition, that the army might move with great caution, and annoy the enemy as much as possible; yet on the day I landed upon the causeway and took the two towers, I determined to occupy that position with my camp, and to assemble the brigantines near the towers. I also ordered half of the force at Cuyoacan and fifty other foot soldiers belonging to the alguazil mayor's division to repair to the same place on the next day. These measures being taken, we remained there that night with the utmost caution; for we were exposed to great danger, as all the people of the city had poured forth along the causeway and on the water for the common defence; and at midnight a great multitude came in canoes and on the causeway to attack our camp. We were thrown into some degree of alarm by this movement of the enemy, especially as it was night, and they were never known to make an assault by night unless fully assured of victory. But as our men were well prepared to receive them, we began to engage in the fight, opening a fire on them with the small field pieces in the brigantines, (each of which carried one,) and also from the archers and musketeers. By this means their advance was checked before they had been able to do us any harm, and we passed the remainder of the night without any further annoyance.

The next morning at day-light, there arrived in the camp on the causeway, where I was posted, fifteen archers and musketeers, fifty men armed with sword and buckler, and seven or eight horse, from the division of Cuyoacan; and at the time of their coming we were engaged in battle with the people from the city in canoes and along the causeway, and the multitude was so great that neither by land or water could we see any thing but human be-

ings, who uttered such dreadful howls and outcries that it seemed as if the world would come to an end. We fought them on the causeway, and gained possession of a bridge which they had abandoned and an entrenchment they had made at its entrance. With the aid of our guns and the cavalry, we made such an impression on them, that we drove them for refuge almost into the nearest houses of the city. As on the other side of the causeway, to which the brigantines could not pass, many canoes came up, and annoyed us much with the arrows and darts that they discharged along the causeway, I caused an opening to be made in it near our camp, and four brigantines to pass through, which, as they passed, dispersed all the canoes, which fled to the settled part of the city; so that they were unable to sally forth into any part of the lake. On the other side of the causeway, the eight brigantines contended with the canoes, and drove them in amongst the houses of the city, pursuing them into the same quarter, where we had not ventured before on account of the many shallow places and stakes that interrupted our progress. When we discovered the canals by which a secure entrance was afforded to the city, we engaged with the canoes in the suburbs, and took some of them, and burned many houses in that quarter of the city. All this day we spent in combating with the enemy, as I have related.

The following day the alguazil mayor with the people whom he had at Iztapalapa, both Spaniards and allies, departed for Cuyoacan, from which place a causeway extends to the main land, a distance of about a league and a half. At the commencement of his march, the alguazil mayor arrived at a small city [Mexicaltzingo] about a quarter of a league from Iztapalapa, which was

situated on the water, and over many parts of it one can ride on horseback; the inhabitants of this place began to attack him, but he defeated them, killing many and burning and destroying the whole city. When I learned that the Indians had made a considerable breach in the causeway, so that the people could no longer pass over it with ease, I sent two brigantines to assist them in passing, of which they formed a bridge for the infantry to cross over the breach. As soon as they had passed, they went to lodge at Cuyoacan, and the alguazil mayor with ten horsemen took the road to the causeway where we had fixed our camp, and when he arrived, he found us engaged in combat; dismounting with his followers, he and they joined in the action against the enemy on the causeway, with whom we had become again involved. When the alguazil mayor took part in the battle, he received a wound in the foot from a lance; but although they wounded him and several others that day, we did them much harm with our heavy ordnance, as well as bowmen and musketeers; so that neither in the canoes, nor on the causeway, did they dare to approach us, but manifested greater fear and less assurance than they were wont to do. We were thus engaged six days, during every one of which we encountered the enemy: and the brigantines passed round the city, burning all the houses they could, having discovered a canal by which they could enter the environs and the suburbs, and even approach the main part of the city, which had a very favorable effect, and made the canoes discontinue their hostile visits, none of them daring to appear within a quarter of a league of our camp.

The next day Pedro de Alvarado, who was stationed with the division of the army at Tacuba, informed me

that, on the other side of the city, there was a causeway which led to the villages on the main land, together with a small one connected with it, by means of which the inhabitants entered and went out when they pleased; and he believed that when they saw themselves compelled by necessity, they would all make their escape that way. Although I rather desired their departure from the city, as we could succeed better against them on terra firma than in a great fortress on the water; nevertheless, in order that they might be wholly surrounded, and without the power of making any progress on the main land, I ordered the alguazil mayor, wounded as he was, to establish his quarters in a small town to which one of the two causeways referred to extended.* He accordingly went thither with twenty-three horse, one hundred foot, and eighteen bowmen and musketeers, leaving me the other fifty foot, which I had with my own force; and on his arrival he encamped where I had directed him. Thus from that time the city of Temixtitan was invested on all sides, wherever it communicated by causeways with terra firma.

I had, most powerful Sire, in the camp on the causeway two hundred Spanish infantry, amongst whom were twenty-five archers and musketeers, exclusive of the men in the brigantines, who were more than two hundred and fifty in number. In order that we might keep the enemy closely invested, and retain a large number of warriors for our allies, I resolved to enter the city as far as possible, and that the brigantines should afford us their support on both sides of the causeway. I also directed that some of the horse and foot from the division at Cuyoacan should repair to the camp, that they might enter with us,

* Now Tepayac, on the north side of the city, called by Bernal Diaz *Tepeaquilla*.

and that ten horsemen should be left at the end of the causeway, as a support to our troops. But some of the allies left at Cuyoacan had rebelled and espoused the cause of the city, amongst whom were the inhabitants of the cities of Suchimilco, Culuacan, Iztapalapa, Chilobusco, Mexicalcingo, Cuitaguacad, and Mizquique, all of which lie upon the lake. These seeking to attack us in the rear, I ordered ten or twelve horse to guard the causeway, and as many more to remain at Cuyoacan, together with more than ten thousand of our allies. I also ordered the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado to attack the city from their posts at the same time, in order that I might gain as much as possible on my side.

Having thus made my arrangements, I sallied forth in the morning from the camp, and marched on foot along the causeway towards the city. We soon found the enemy in defence of a breach that had been made in the road, as wide as the length of a lance, and of the same depth, where they had formed an entrenchment. Here an action ensued, in which valor was shown on both sides. At length we prevailed, and pursued our route along the causeway until we arrived at the entrance of the city, where stood a tower of idols, and near its base a very large bridge that was raised, under which a broad street of water* passed, defended by a strong entrenchment. As soon as we reached this place, the enemy began to attack us; but as the brigantines were on both sides the road, we carried the entrenchment without loss, which we could not have done unless aided by the brigantines. When the enemy began to abandon the ground, the people in the brigantines disembarked, and we passed over the water by means of them, together

* *Una calle de agua*; so Cortes terms the canals.

with the allies from Tlascala, Guajocingo, Chalco, and Tesaico, in all more than eighty thousand men. While we were employed in filling up with stone and brick the breach made by the destruction of the bridge, the Spaniards gained another entrenchment on the principal and widest street in the whole city. As it contained no water, the entrenchment was easily carried. They then pursued their route along the street until they arrived at another bridge, which the enemy had raised, excepting only one piece of timber, over which they passed. Having reached a place of safety, rendered secure by the intervention of water, they immediately took away the beam. On another part of the ground adjoining the bridge on the opposite side, the enemy had constructed another large entrenchment of clay and unburnt bricks. When we reached this spot, we were unable to cross without throwing ourselves into the water, and this was attended with great danger, as the inhabitants fought with resolute valor. On both sides of the street there was an immense multitude of them, who attacked us in a courageous manner from the terraces; but when a number of our archers and musketeers arrived, and we discharged the two cannon so as to rake the street, we did them great mischief. As soon as this was known, several Spaniards threw themselves into the water, and passed to the other side. Immediately the enemy, on seeing this movement, abandoned the entrenchment and the terraces, and fled through the street, so that all our force passed over. We were engaged more than two hours in carrying this entrenchment. I gave directions at once to fill up the space over which the bridge had passed, and to demolish the entrenchment; and in the mean time, the Spaniards and our Indian allies pursued their way along the street, full two bow-

shots, when they came to another bridge, near a square occupied by some of the principal buildings in the city. This bridge had not been removed, nor had any entrenchment been made upon it; for the enemy had not imagined that we should gain that day any part of what had already fallen into our hands, nor had we ourselves expected to accomplish more than one-half as much. I placed a piece of ordnance at the entrance to this square, from which the enemy received much annoyance, although they were so thronged that none could be seen to fall. When the Spaniards discovered that there was no water there, from which danger was wont to arise, they resolved to enter the square; and as soon as the enemy saw this determination carried into effect, and perceived the great multitudes of our allies, although without us they would have had no great fear of them, they turned their backs, and the Spaniards and our allies pursued them, until they took refuge within the enclosure of the temple, surrounded by a wall of stone and lime. This enclosure, as described in my former relation, possesses an extent equal to a town containing four hundred families; it was soon, however, abandoned by the enemy, and the Spaniards with our allies took possession of it, and remained for some within it, and in the towers.

When the inhabitants saw that there was no cavalry with the party, they rallied and returned to attack the Spaniards, whom they forcibly expelled from the towers, the court, and the whole enclosure, placing them in circumstances of great danger and difficulty; and as they continued to retreat, they took refuge under the gateways leading to the court. But the enemy annoyed them so much, that, abandoning this position, they retreated

again into the public square, from whence they were driven with great violence into the street, so that they were obliged to leave behind the gun that was on the square. As the Spaniards could not sustain the attacks of the enemy, they continued to retreat, exposed to much danger; to which, indeed, they would have fallen victims, but that it pleased God three of the cavalry should arrive at this juncture and enter the square, which the enemy no sooner perceived than they believed more were coming, and began to fly. The Spaniards killed some of them, and regained possession of the court and enclosure that I have mentioned above. Ten or twelve of the principal inhabitants of the city took refuge in the largest and highest tower of the temple, having a hundred and more steps leading up to it, where they fortified themselves; but four or five Spaniards forced their way up, and although the Mexicans defended themselves resolutely, overpowered them, and destroyed the lives of the whole. Afterwards five or six more of the cavalry arrived, who with others formed an ambuscade, by means of which they despatched more than thirty of the enemy. As it was already evening, I ordered our people to be collected and to retreat; and while they were retreating, the multitude of the enemy so pressed upon them, that had it not been for the cavalry the Spaniards would have suffered great loss.

But as all the difficult places in the street and on the causeway, where danger was anticipated, had been filled up and levelled by me at the time of the retreat, the horse could now enter or depart over them with ease; so that when the enemy assailed our rearguard, the cavalry returning charged upon them, continually destroying and despatching them with their lances; and as

the street was very broad, there was room enough to perform this manœuvre several times. Notwithstanding the enemy saw that they suffered by this means, the dogs rushed on in such a rabid manner that we could not stop them, nor would they desist from following us. The whole day would have been spent in this manner, had they not taken possession of several terraces that projected into the street, from which the cavalry were exposed to great annoyance; and so we hastened through the street to our camp, without the loss of a single Spaniard, although we had many wounded. In our retreat we set fire to the best houses on the street, that when we entered the city again, the enemy might not annoy us from the terraces. The same day the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, at their respective stations, encountered the enemy in a very gallant manner; and at the time of the combats we were a league and a half from the one, and a league from the other. The population of the city, however, is of so great an extent, that it makes the distances seem less. The allies, who were with those leaders in immense numbers, fought well, and fell back that day without loss.

In the mean time, Don Fernando, lord of the city of Tesaico and the Province of Aculuacan, of whom I have above made mention to your Majesty, had succeeded in drawing to our standard the people of his city and province, especially the most prominent persons, although they were not so decided in their friendship as they afterwards proved. Every day many caciques, and some of his own brothers, joined Don Fernando with the determination to take sides with us, and oppose the Mexicans. As Don Fernando was a young man, and had a strong regard for the Spaniards, knowing that he had obtained

his great seignory over others whose right of succession was superior to his own, by the favor of your Majesty, he labored to the utmost to induce all his subjects to engage in the war against the city, and share toil and danger with us. He conferred with his brothers, six or seven in number, all well disposed young men, and begged them to come to my assistance with all the people of their districts. One of them, named Istrisuchil, twenty-three or four years of age, of great gallantry, and beloved and feared by all, he sent as a leader, who arrived in the camp of the causeway with more than thirty-thousand men, well equipped in their manner; and twenty thousand more joined the other two camps. I received them joyfully, thanking them for their good disposition and conduct. Your imperial Majesty may well consider whether it was not a desirable reinforcement, and substantial proof of friendship on the part of Don Fernando, and imagine what the people of Temixtitan thought when they saw coming against them the people who were their vassals, friends, relations, brethren, and even fathers and sons.*

*Don Fernando, lord of Tezcuco, having been recently baptized, acted in such a manner that neither the most fervent Christian, nor the most valiant captain, could surpass him in honorable conduct; and by these glorious deeds, and not by lies, the Indians should be judged.—L.

M. Ternaux has published, in his valuable collection, a memoir written originally in the Mexican language by a descendant of the caciques of Tezcuco, in which the events of the conquest are briefly described. The Mexican name of the author is *Ixtlilxochitl*, which is probably the same written by Cortes in the text *Istrisuchil*. This memoir was published in the Spanish language at Mexico in 1829, edited by Don Carlos Maria de Bustamante, who denounces the Tezcucans in unmeasured terms for their friendship to the Conqueror. Bustamante is of Indian descent, and distinguished for his literary attainments. There is a notice of him in that agreeable work, Mdme. Calderon's *Life in Mexico*, vol. ii. pp. 123-4-5.

The combat in the city lasted two days, as I have above described; and besides these succors, the inhabitants of the city of Suchimilco, situated on the lake, and certain villages of the Utumies, (Otomites,) a mountain race, more numerous than those of Suchimilco, and slaves of the lord of Temixtitan, came to offer themselves as vassals of your Majesty, begging me to pardon their dilatoriness. I received them well, and was much gratified by their arrival, as they were more likely than any others to make an impression on the people of Cuyoacan.

As from the camp of the causeway where I was posted, we had by means of the brigantines burned many houses in the suburbs of the city, and no canoe dared to make its appearance in that quarter, it seemed to me that seven brigantines would be sufficient for the security of our position, and I therefore determined to send three to the camp of the alguazil mayor, and the same number to that of Pedro de Alvarado. I gave particular instructions to the commanders of these brigantines, to run day and night from one camp to the other, some one way and some the other, since the enemy were in the habit of visiting the part of the main land in the vicinity of the two camps with their canoes, which they loaded with water, fruits, maize, and other supplies; and besides I directed them to aid the two divisions of the army stationed at those places, whenever they should seek to enter the city for the purpose of provoking hostilities. Six brigantines accordingly departed to the two camps; a necessary measure, that proved of great advantage, for every day and night they made incursions upon the enemy, and took many canoes and prisoners.

CHAPTER IV.

When these measures had been taken, and the people already mentioned had come to our aid, desiring to be at peace with us, I addressed them all, and informed them that I had determined to enter and attack the city in two days from that time, when I desired them to come prepared for the war, and by this means I should know whether they were true allies. They promised to comply with my wishes. The next day I caused our force to be got ready and fully equipped, and wrote to the officers in the other camps and the brigantines what I had resolved upon, and what it was incumbent on them to do.

The next morning, after having heard mass, and given the captains their orders, I departed from our quarters with fifteen or twenty horse and three hundred Spanish infantry, accompanied by all our allies, an infinite host; and taking my course along the causeway towards the city, when we had advanced three bow-shots beyond the camp we fell in with the enemy, who were expecting us with horrid cries. As no hostilities had taken place for three days before, they had in the mean time removed from the water whatever we had thrown in to fill up the breaches in the road, and rendered every thing stronger and more difficult to take than before. The brigantines came up on both sides of the causeway, and as they were able to approach quite near the enemy, they caused great destruction amongst them by their guns, musketry,

and crossbows. Seeing this, the men leaped out upon the ground and took possession of an entrenchment and bridge; and we began to pass over in pursuit of the enemy, who immediately fortified themselves behind other bridges and entrenchments which they had thrown up; these we succeeded in carrying, although with greater exertion and hazard than before, and we drove them from the whole street and the square containing the principal houses of the city. Here I ordered the Spanish troops to halt, while I went with our allies to close up with stone and sun-dried bricks the places where the water flowed across our route; and although more than ten thousand Indians assisted in this work, it was not finished until the hour of vespers. During all this time the Spanish troops and our allies were engaged in fighting and skirmishing with the inhabitants, and laying snares for them, by means of which many perished. Taking the cavalry I scoured the streets of the city for a short time, driving the inhabitants with our lances from those parts where there was no water, and keeping them back so that they no longer dared to come upon dry land.

Considering that the inhabitants of this city were rebels, and that they discovered so strong a determination to defend themselves or perish, I inferred two things: first, that we should recover little or none of the wealth of which they had deprived us; and second, that they had given us occasion and compelled us utterly to exterminate them. On this last consideration I dwelt with most feeling, and it weighed heavily upon my mind, leading me to think in what way I could strike them with dread so that they should come to a knowledge of their error, and of the calamities we should bring upon them; with this view I continued to burn and demolish the towers of

their idols and their houses. That they might become more sensible of their situation, I this day set fire to those noble edifices in the great square, where on the former occasion when they expelled us from the city the Spanish troops and myself were quartered. These buildings were so extensive that a prince with more than six hundred persons in his family and domestic retinue would have found ample space for their accommodation. There were others adjacent to these, which although somewhat smaller were more gay and elegant, and served Muteczuma for aviaries, in which he had every variety of birds known in that country. Although it grieved me much, yet as it grieved the enemy more, I determined to burn these palaces; whereupon they manifested great sorrow, as well as their allies from the cities on the lake, because none of them had supposed we should be able to penetrate so far into the city. This struck them with terrible dismay.

Having set fire to these buildings, as it was now evening, I assembled our force to return to the camp; and when the inhabitants saw that we were retreating, they pursued us in great numbers, and coming up in a furious manner, fell upon our rearguard. But the streets being throughout favorable for the movements of horses, the cavalry turned about to charge upon them, and pierced many of them with their lances; yet they did not cease rushing upon our rear uttering loud cries. This day they showed some feeling and not a little dismay, especially when they saw the people of Tezcuco, Chalco, Suchimilco, and the Otumies entering the city, burning and destroying it and fighting against them; all of them calling out by name the province to which they belonged; and in another quarter the Tlascallans, who, as well as

the others, displayed to the inhabitants of the city the bodies of their countrymen cut into pieces, exclaiming at the same time that they would have them for supper that night and for breakfast the next day, as was in fact the case. Thus we returned to our camp to rest, for that day we had toiled much. The seven brigantines that I had retained entered the water-streets of the city on the same day and burned a considerable part of it. The captains of the other divisions of the army and the six brigantines also fought gallantly on that day. I might well enlarge upon their exploits, but to avoid prolixity I omit the account, only adding that they returned victoriously to their camps without suffering any loss.

On the following day, at an early hour of the morning, after hearing mass, I returned to the city in the same order with my whole force, so that the enemy might not have time to open the breaches in the road, and throw up entrenchments; but although we were early on the ground, of the three water-streets that crossed the road leading from the camp to the large houses on the square, two were in the same condition as on the previous days, and extremely difficult to be taken; the combat lasted from eight o'clock till one in the afternoon, during which time all the arrows and balls carried by the archers and musketeers were exhausted. Your Majesty may well believe that the danger was very great to which we were exposed every time we gained these bridges, since in order to accomplish it the Spanish soldiers were obliged to throw themselves into the water and swim to the opposite side; this could not be done, nor attempted by all, as the enemy stood ready to oppose their landing by slashing them with knives or thrusting lances at them. But as

they no longer had terraces from which to annoy us on the opposite quarter, and we kept up a shower of arrows from our side, the distance apart being but the cast of a horse-shoe, the Spaniards early in the day took fresh courage, and determined to pass, especially when they saw that this was my determination likewise, and that, sink or swim, the thing must be effected. It will, perhaps, appear to your Majesty that as we encountered so much peril in gaining these bridges and entrenchments, we were guilty of neglect in not retaining them after we had once succeeded in taking them, and thus avoiding the daily return anew to so much danger and toil, which were unquestionably great, as they must appear to those not present. But your Majesty should know that this was impossible, for in order to accomplish it two things were necessary—either that we should remove our camp to the great square containing the temples of the idols, or that our people should guard the bridges by night—both of which would be attended with great danger, and found to be impracticable. Should we encamp in the city, every night and every hour the enemy would surprise us with sudden attacks, and being themselves numerous, and we but few, the labor would be insupportable to resist them on all sides. Then as to guarding the bridges by night, the Spaniards are so fatigued by fighting through the day, that none of them are fit to perform guard-duty at night; we were therefore compelled to retake them every day that we entered the city.

On this day, as there was much delay in gaining the bridges, and in returning to fill up the water, there was no opportunity to do more than to take two other bridges on the other principal street leading to the city of Tacuba, which we filled up, and afterwards burned many

good houses on that street. By this time it was evening, and the hour to return to camp, which was attended with little less danger than taking the bridges; for as soon as they saw us retire, the inhabitants recovered themselves to such a degree that it seemed as if they had been victorious, and that we were flying before them; it was likewise necessary for our safe return, that the space occupied by the bridges should be well filled up so as to be even with the street, that the cavalry might be able to move freely from one side to the other. Sometimes when thus returning to camp, and the enemy pursued us so ravenously, we would pretend to fly, and then turn about suddenly upon them, and take twelve or thirteen of the boldest of them prisoners. By these means, and the ambuscades we laid for them, into which they were constantly falling, they always suffered; and their conduct was certainly worthy of admiration, for however great the evils and losses to which they were exposed in harassing our march, they did not relax their pursuit till they saw us out of the city. Thus we returned to our camp, when the captains of the other posts informed me that they had succeeded well the same day, and had destroyed many of the enemy by land and water; and Pedro de Alvarado, in particular, who was stationed at Tacuba, wrote me that he had taken two or three bridges; but as he was on the causeway that leads from the market-place of Mexico to Tacuba, and the three brigantines I had given him could come up on one side so as to touch the causeway, he was not exposed to so much danger as on the previous days. In that quarter there were more bridges and a greater number of breaches in the causeway, but fewer terraces, than in the others.

During all this time the inhabitants of Iztapalapa, Oi-

chilobuzco, Mexicacingo, Culuacan, Mizquique and Cuitaguaca, which, as I have mentioned, are situated on the fresh lake, had never come to desire peace with us, nor had we suffered any annoyance from them. But the people of Chalco were loyal vassals of your Majesty, and seeing that we were fully occupied with our operations against the great city, they united with others who dwelt around the lakes, and did all the mischief in their power to the above mentioned towns on the water. These perceiving that every day we were victorious over the inhabitants of Temixtitan, and taking into consideration what they suffered and would suffer from our allies, resolved to come in; they arrived at our camp, and begged me to pardon the past, and order the Chalconians and their other neighbors not to injure them any more. I answered them that I was pleased with their coming, and had no unfriendly feelings towards any but the inhabitants of the city; but in order to prove the sincerity of their professions, I requested them, as it was my determination not to remove my camp till by peace or war I had obtained possession of the city, and as they had many canoes that might afford me aid, that they would get ready as many as they could, with all their most warlike people, in order to come to our assistance hereafter. I also desired, as the Spaniards had only a few, mean huts, and it was now the season for heavy rains, that they would erect as many barracks as possible at the camp, and bring in their canoes bricks and timber from the houses of the city that were nearest to us. They replied that their canoes and warriors would be in readiness every day; and in building the barracks, they worked with great diligence, and on both sides of the two towers of the causeway where I was encamped,

they erected so many, that it was a distance of more than three or four bowshots from the first to the last. Your Majesty will understand that the causeway leading over the deepest part of the lake was so wide, that these huts were built on either side of it, leaving a street in the middle along which we could come and go, on foot or horseback, at pleasure; and there were constantly in the camp, including Spaniards and the Indians who waited on them, more than two thousand persons. All the rest of our division consisting of allies, were quartered at Cuyoacan, a league and a half from the camp. The people of those towns (above mentioned) also supplied us with some articles of food, (of which we had need enough,) especially fish and cherries; the latter being so abundant that they are sufficient during the five or six months that they last for double the population of the country.*

As we had now entered the city two or three days in succession from our camp, besides three or four former visits, and had always come off victorious, having with our guns, crossbows, and musketry destroyed a host of people, we expected every hour that they would be induced to send us proposals of peace, which we desired as a means of safety; but no progress was made by us in drawing them to this conclusion. In order to make the necessity of peace greater to them, and to see if I could constrain them to it, I resolved to enter the city every day and attack the inhabitants with the force I

* According to Nuttall there are more native species of the plum and cherry in North America than any other part of the world. No modern botanist seems to have visited the central portions of Mexico; some parts of California were explored by the late Mr. Douglas, of London, and by Mr. Nuttall from the United States, who have greatly enriched the North American Flora by their interesting contributions from that quarter.

carried, in three or four different places; and I summoned to my aid all the people of the cities on the water in their canoes; on the morning of that day I had in my camp more than one hundred thousand men of our allies. I ordered the four brigantines with half of the canoes, about fifteen hundred in number, to go to one quarter; and the three others with the same number of canoes to go to another quarter; and that they should direct their course so as to surround the city, set fire to it, and do all the mischief in their power. I made my entry by the principal street, which I found free from impediments as far as the great houses on the square; none of the bridges were raised, and I passed into the street that leads to Tacuba, on which were six or seven bridges. From thence I caused a captain to enter by another street with sixty or seventy men, followed by six horsemen for security; and with them went more than ten or twelve thousand Indians of our allies. I ordered another captain to do the same on another street; and I with the people that were left followed on the street of Tacuba, and took three bridges, which were filled up. The other bridges I left for another time, because it was evening, and they could be better taken on a future occasion. I was very desirous of securing this noble street, in order that the force in the camp of Pedro de Alvarado might communicate with ours, and pass from one to the other; and also that the brigantines should have a similar communication. On that day I was quite victorious both by land and water, and obtained considerable spoil from the city. The alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were also successful with their divisions.

The following day I returned to the city in the same

order as on the former days, and gave thanks to God for so great a victory, since in the parts where we entered no resistance appeared to be made to us; and the enemy retreated with such rapidity, that we seemed to have gained three fourths of the city; and they also passed in great haste in the direction of the camp of Pedro de Alvarado. Both this day and the day before I was quite certain that they would sue for peace, for which I was always prepared, whether victorious or not. But notwithstanding, we never found any sign of peace on their part; and that day we returned with great pleasure to our camp, although it did not cease to oppress my mind to see the inhabitants of the city so determined on their fate.

During the past days Pedro de Alvarado had taken several bridges, and in order to retain them he placed sentries of foot soldiers in the day time, and horsemen at night to guard them; the rest of his force repaired to his camp, which was three-quarters of a league distant. As this labor was insupportable, he resolved to remove his camp to the head of the causeway leading to the market-place of Temixtitan, which is a square somewhat larger than that of Salamanca, and entirely surrounded by covered walks; and in order to reach it, it was only necessary to gain two or three other bridges, which, however, were very wide and difficult to be taken, and kept him employed several days, during which he fought incessantly, though with success. On the day above mentioned, when he saw indications of weakness on the part of the enemy, and that in the quarter where I was I had been engaged in continued and vigorous assaults, he was so much flushed with the heat of victory in gaining so many bridges and entrenchments, that he

determined to pass over and take a bridge where more than sixty paces of the causeway had been broken up and filled with water to the depth of nine or ten feet. He carried his purpose into effect the same day, and aided by the brigantines, crossed the water and gained the bridge, pursuing the enemy, who took to flight. Pedro de Alvarado then hastened to close up the breach so that the cavalry could pass; and also because I had cautioned him every day, both in writing and verbally, not to gain an inch of ground without rendering it perfectly safe for the horse to come and go, that they might join in the attacks. As soon as the inhabitants saw that only forty or fifty Spaniards and a few of our allies had crossed to that side, and that the horse were unable to get over, they turned upon them so suddenly that our people retreated and threw themselves into the water; and three or four Spaniards were taken prisoners by the enemy, who immediately carried them to be sacrificed [in the temple]; several of our allies were also slain. At last, Pedro de Alvarado made good his retreat to his camp.

When on that day I returned to my quarters and heard what had happened, nothing in the world could have grieved me more; because it was the means of giving fresh courage to the enemy, and leading them to believe that we should not dare to make another attempt to carry the city. The reason that Pedro Alvarado wished to take that ill-advised step was, as I have said, that he saw a large part of the Indian force already in his power, and that the rest gave indications of weakness; but it was chiefly on account of the importunities of the people in his division, who urged him to capture the market-place, as if that was taken the whole city would be carried, and all the strength and expectations that the

Indians possessed in it. Moreover, Alvarado's men observed that I was continually pursuing my attacks on the city, and would be likely to take the market-place before them; and as they were nearer to it than we, they considered it a point of honor to be the first to reach it. For this reason Pedro de Alvarado was greatly importuned, and the same thing occurred to me in my camp; for all the Spaniards earnestly solicited me to enter through one of three streets that led to the market-place, as we should meet with no resistance, and that being gained, we should have less trouble hereafter. I made every pretence in my power for not yielding to their wishes, but concealed the true cause; which was on account of the obstacles and perils that presented themselves to my mind; since on entering the market-place, there would be in our way innumerable terraces, bridges, and breaches in the causeways, so that every house that we should have to pass would be like an island in the midst of the water.

As on that evening when I returned to camp I was informed of the defeat of Pedro de Alvarado, I determined to go the next morning to his quarters and reprove him for what had occurred, and at the same time to see what he had gained, and where he had removed his camp, instructing him as to the measures necessary for his safety and the annoyance of the enemy. But on arriving at his camp, I was astonished to see how far he had advanced into the city, and the dangerous passes and bridges he had gained, and I no longer thought him deserving of as much censure as I had supposed; so that having conversed with him respecting what remained to be done, I returned the same day to my own quarters.

After this I effected several entries into the city at the

usual points; and while the brigantines and canoes made their attacks in two different quarters, I proceeded through the city to four others. We were always successful, and great numbers of the enemy were slain; and besides, every day multitudes of people declared in our favor. I still delayed advancing my position more within the city—first, that the enemy might have an opportunity to recede from their obstinate and implacable policy; and secondly, because our entrance would be attended with great peril, as they were firmly united, full of courage, and resolved on death. But when the Spaniards saw so long a delay in this matter, more than twenty days having elapsed since they had been continually engaged in combating the enemy, they importuned me in the most earnest manner, as I have already stated, to enter the city and seize upon the market-place; which being done, the enemy would have less room to act on the defensive, and if they did not surrender, they would perish with hunger and thirst, having nothing to drink but the salt water of the lake. When I made some excuse for not complying with their wishes, your Majesty's Treasurer assured me that the whole camp declared it ought to be done. I answered him and other respectable persons who were there, that their design and request were worthy of approbation, and no one desired to effect the object more than myself; but that I declined attempting it for a reason which their importunity compelled me to avow, namely, that although he and the others would act worthily when surrounded by danger, there were some who would not do so. At length, however, they compelled me to yield my consent to do whatever I could in this matter, after having concerted

the plan of operations with the other divisions of the army.

The next day I assembled several of the principal men in our camp, when we resolved to inform the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado of our intention to enter the city on the following day, and if possible, to reach the market-place. I instructed them what it would be necessary for them to do on the side of Tacuba; and besides writing this, that they might be still better informed, I sent two of my servants to acquaint them with the whole matter. The orders were, that the alguazil mayor should join the camp of Pedro de Alvarado with a force consisting of ten horse, one hundred Spanish infantry, and fifteen archers and musketeers; that he should leave behind in his camp ten other horse, arranging with them, that when the battle commenced the next day, they should place themselves in ambush behind some houses; and that he should carry off all his baggage as if the camp was to be broken up, so that when the enemy from the city pursued them, the ambuscade might fall upon their rear. Likewise, that the alguazil mayor with his three brigantines, and Pedro de Alvarado with the three others, should gain possession of the great breach in the road where the latter was defeated, and hasten to fill it up; that they should then advance, but by no means leave the spot or advance a single step before the breach was filled, and the road placed in good order; and, finally, if they could reach the market-place without much risk or danger, they should make every exertion to do so, and I would do the same. I added, that although I sent them these instructions, they must see I did not oblige them to take a single step that would be likely to lead to any repulse or disaster; and this I

added because I knew from the character of the men that they would face any difficulty in obedience to my orders, though they knew it would cost them their lives. Having despatched these two servants of mine with this message, they proceeded to the camp and found there the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, to whom they communicated the whole plan as concerted in our own camp. As they would have to act against one quarter only of the city, while I had many different points to assail, I desired them to send me seventy or eighty infantry, to add to the force with which I should enter the city on the following day; these troops accordingly came in company with my two servants the same night, and lodged in our camp.

The next day after mass,* in pursuance of the arrangements already mentioned, the seven brigantines with more than three thousand canoes of our allies left our encampment; and I with twenty-five horse and all the other force I had, including the seventy men from the division at Tacuba, took up the line of march and entered the city, where I distributed the troops in the following manner: there were three streets leading from where we entered to the market-place, called by the Indians Tianguizco, and the whole square on which it is situated they call Tlaltelulco; one of these streets was the principal avenue to the market-place, which I ordered your Majesty's treasurer and auditor to take, with seventy men and more than fifteen or twenty thousand of our allies; the rearguard consisting of seven or eight horse. I also

* Archbishop Lorenzana, in his note on this passage, greatly extols the pious fervor of Cortes, who, he says, "whether in the field or on the causeway, in the midst of the enemy or toiling by night or day," never omitted the celebration of the mass.

directed that whenever a bridge or entrenchment was taken, that it should be immediately filled up; and for this purpose they had twelve men with pickaxes, together with many more of our allies who were very useful in this kind of work. The two other streets also lead from that of Tacuba to the market-place, and are narrower and full of causeways, bridges and water-streets, (or canals.) I ordered two captains* to take the widest of these, with eighty men and more than ten thousand of our Indian allies; and at the head of the street of Tacuba I placed two heavy cannon with eight horse to guard them. With eight other horse and about one hundred foot, including twenty-five or more bowmen and musketeers, and an innumerable host of our allies, I took up the line of march along the other narrow street, intending to penetrate as far as possible. At its entrance I caused the cavalry to halt, and ordered them by no means to pass from there, nor to come in my rear, unless I first sent them orders to that effect; and I then alighted from my horse, and we came to an entrenchment that had been raised in front of a bridge, which we carried by means of a small field-piece, and the archers and musketeers, and then proceeded along the causeway, which was broken in two or three places, where we encountered the enemy. So great was the number of our allies who ascended the terraces and other places, that it did not appear possible any thing could stop us. When we had gained the two bridges, the entrenchments and causeway, our allies followed along the street without taking any spoil; and I remained behind with about twenty Spanish soldiers on a small island, for I saw that some of our Indians were getting into trou-

* These were Andres de Tapia and George Alvarado.

ble with the enemy; and in some instances they retreated until they cast themselves into the water, and with our aid were enabled to return to the attack. Besides this, we were on the watch to prevent the enemy from sallying forth out of the cross-streets in the rear of the Spaniards who had advanced on the main street, and at this time sent us word that they had made much progress, and were not far from the great square of the market-place; adding, that they wished to push forward, for they already heard the noise of the combat in which the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were engaged on their side of the city. I answered them, that they must by no means go forward without leaving the bridges well filled up, so that if it became necessary to beat a retreat, the water might present no obstacle or impediment, for in this consisted all the danger. They sent to me a message in reply, the amount of which was that the whole they had gained was left in good condition, and that I might go and see if it was not so. But suspecting that they had disregarded the orders, and left the bridges imperfectly filled up, I went to the place and found they had passed a breach in the road ten or twelve paces wide; and the water that flowed through it was ten or twelve feet deep. At the time the troops had passed this ditch, thus formed, they had thrown into it wood and reed-canes, and as they had crossed a few at a time and with great circumspection, the wood and canes had not sunk beneath their weight; and they were so intoxicated with the pleasure of victory that they imagined it to be sufficiently firm. At the moment I reached this bridge of troubles, I discovered some Spaniards and many of our allies flying back in great haste, and the enemy like dogs in pursuit of them; and when I saw such a route,

I began to cry out, "Hold, hold!" and on approaching the water, I beheld it full of Spaniards and Indians, in so dense a mass that it seemed as if there was not room for a straw to float. The enemy charged on the fugitives so hotly, that in the *melée* they threw themselves into the water after them; and soon the enemy's canoes came up by means of the canal, and took the Spaniards alive.

As this affair was so sudden, and I saw them killing our men, I resolved to remain there, and perish in the fight. The way in which I and those who were with me could do the most good, was to give our hands to some unfortunate Spaniards who were drowning, and draw them out of the water; some came out wounded, others half-drowned, and others without arms, whom I sent forward. Already such multitudes of the enemy pressed upon us, that they had completely surrounded me and the twelve or fifteen men who were with me; and being deeply interested in endeavoring to save those that were sinking, I did not observe nor regard the danger to which I was exposed. Several Indians of the enemy had already advanced to seize me, and would have borne me off, had it not been for a captain of fifty men whom I always had with me, and also a youth of his company, to whom next to God I owed my life; and in saving mine like a valiant man, he lost his own.* In the mean time the Spaniards who had fled before the enemy, pursued their course along the causeway, and as it was small and narrow, and on the same level as the water, which had been effected by those dogs on purpose

* Antonio de Quiñones was the captain, and Francisco de Olea, the youth, according to Gomara; who says that the latter cut off at one blow the arms of the men that had seized Cortes, and was himself immediately slain by the enemy. Cortes was then rescued by Quiñones.—*Cron. Nuev. Esp. Cap.* 138.

to annoy us; and as the road was crowded also with our allies who had been routed, much delay was thereby occasioned, enabling the enemy to come up on both sides by water, and to take and destroy as many as they pleased. The captain who was with me, Antonio de Quiñones, said to me, "Let us leave this place and save your life, since you know that without you none of us can escape;" but he could not induce me to go. When he saw this, he seized me in his arms, that he might force me away; and although I would have been better satisfied to die than live, yet by the importunity of this captain and of my other companions, we began to retreat, making our way with our swords and bucklers against the enemy, who pressed hard upon us. At this moment there came up a servant of mine on horseback, and made a little room; but presently he received a blow in his throat from a lance thrown from a low terrace, that brought him to the ground. While I was in the midst of this conflict, sustaining the attacks of the enemy, and waiting for the crowd on the narrow causeway to reach a place of safety, one of my servants brought me a horse to ride upon. But the mud on the causeway, occasioned by the coming and going of persons by water, was so deep that no one could stand, especially with the jostlings of the people against one another in their efforts to escape.

I mounted the horse, but not to fight, as this was impossible on horseback; but if it had been practicable, I should have found on the little island, opposite the narrow causeway, the eight horsemen I had left there, who were unable to do more than to effect their return; which, indeed, was so dangerous that two mares on which two of my servants rode fell from the causeway

into the water; one of them was killed by the Indians, but the other was saved by some of the infantry. Another servant of mine, Cristobal de Guzman, rode a horse that they gave him at the little island to bring to me, on which I might make my escape; but the enemy killed both him and the horse before he reached me; his death spread sorrow through the whole camp, and even to this day his loss is still mourned by those who knew him. But after all our troubles, by the blessing of God, those of us who survived reached the street of Tacuba, which was very wide; and collecting the people, I took my post with nine horsemen in the rearguard. The enemy pressed forward with all the pride of victory, as if resolved that none should escape with life; but falling back in the best manner I could, I sent word to the treasurer and auditor to retreat to the public square in good order. I also sent similar orders to the two other captains who had entered the city by the street that led to the market-place, both of whom had fought gallantly, and carried many entrenchments and bridges, which they had caused to be well filled up, on account of which they were able to retire without loss. Before the retreat of the treasurer and auditor some of the enemy threw in their way two or three heads of Christian men from the upper part of an entrenchment were they were fighting, but it was not known whether they were persons belonging to the camp of Pedro de Alvarado, or our own. All being assembled in the square, so large a multitude of the enemy charged upon us from every direction, that we had as much as we could do to keep them back; and that too in places where, before this defeat, the enemy would have fled before three horse and ten foot. Immediately after, in a lofty tower filled with

their idols that stood near the square, they burned perfumes and fumigated the air with certain gums peculiar to this country, that greatly resemble anime; which they offer to their idols in token of victory.* Although we endeavored to throw obstacles in the way of the enemy, it was out of our power, as our people were hurrying back to the camp.

In this defeat thirty-five or forty Spaniards, and more than a thousand of our Indian allies, were slain by the enemy, besides more than twenty Christians wounded, among whom was myself in the leg. We lost the small field-piece that we had taken with us, and many cross-bows, muskets, and other arms. Immediately after their victory, in order to strike terror into the alguazil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, the enemy carried all the Spaniards, both living and dead, whom they had taken, to the Tlatelulco, which is the market-place, and in some of the lofty towers that are situated there they sacrificed them naked, opening their breasts and taking out their hearts to offer them to the idols. This was seen by the Spaniards of Alvarado's division from where they were fighting, and from the whiteness of the naked bodies which they saw sacrificed they knew them to be Christians; but although they suffered great sorrow and dismay at the sight, they effected a retreat to their camp after having fought gallantly that day, and carried their conquests almost to the market-place, which would have been taken, if God on account of our sins had not permitted so great a disaster. We returned to our camp, such was the grief we felt, somewhat earlier than had

* Gum Copal is obtained from Mexico; the name is also Mexican, originally *copalli*. Another gum is found there resembling the incense of Arabia.

been usual on other days; and in addition to our other losses, we had been told that the brigantines had fallen into the hands of the enemy, who attacked them with their canoes in the rear; but it pleased God, this was not true, although the brigantines and the canoes of our allies had been seen in danger enough, and even a brigantine came near being lost, the captain and master of it being wounded, the former of whom died eight days afterwards.

That day and the following night, the enemy made great rejoicings with horns and kettle-drums, appearing to be overwhelmed with joy; and they opened all the streets and bridges as they were before, and in setting their fires and sentries at night, they came within two bow-shots of our camp; but as we had returned discomfited, wounded, and destitute of arms, there was need of rest and recruiting. In the mean time, the rulers of the city took occasion to send messengers to their subjects in many provinces, to say that they had gained a signal victory and destroyed many Christians, and that soon they would put an end to us, charging them by no means to make peace with us; and the messengers carried with them as credentials two heads of horses that they had killed, and some others of Christians, which they displayed for the purpose of showing wherever it seemed advisable that there was more reason for the rebellious to persevere than before. But notwithstanding all this, as the enemy did not grow more presumptuous, nor sensible of our weakness, every day some Spaniards, on foot or horse, with many of our allies, made sallies into the city, though they were unable to gain more than a few bridges in the next street before coming to the square.

Two days after the defeat, which was already known throughout the adjacent districts, some of the inhabitants of a place called Quarnaguacar, [Cuernavaca,] who were subject to the city, but had joined our allies, came to the camp and reported that the people of Marinalco, their neighbors, had done them much mischief and laid waste their country; that they had now formed an alliance with the large province of Cuisco, and were about to wage a destructive war against them, on account of their having become subjects of your Majesty and allies of ours; and that they intended after subduing them to march against us. Although so short a time had elapsed since our disaster, and we were in a situation rather to require succor than to give it, yet as they urged the matter with great importunity, I determined to go to their assistance; and notwithstanding much opposition on the part of our people, who said that to send away from the camp any part of our force would be ruinous to ourselves, I despatched in company with the people who had asked our aid eighty foot and ten horse, under the command of Andreas de Tapia, whom I particularly charged to do whatever would most promote the service of your Majesty, and our own security, but, as he saw the necessitous condition in which we were placed, not to consume more than ten days in going and returning. He departed, and having reached a little village between Marinalco and Coadnoacad, he found the enemy expecting him. Being joined by the people of Coadnoacad, he commenced the attack at once, and with such gallantry did our men acquit themselves, that they routed the enemy and pursued them until they took refuge in Marinalco. That town stands on a very lofty height, inaccessible to cavalry; and on that account, after destroying whatever

was on the plain, the detachment returned to camp, having achieved a victory within the ten days. On the heights of Marinalco there are many springs of excellent water, and the place is cool and pleasant.

While this captain was absent on the expedition for the relief of our allies, some of the Spanish troops, both infantry and cavalry, as I have already mentioned, together with the allies, penetrated the city in a hostile manner as far as the great buildings on the square; they were unable to pass beyond, because the enemy had opened the street of water at the entrance of the square, which is very deep and wide, and on the opposite side was a very large and strong entrenchment, where an action ensued, and continued till night separated them.

A cacique of the province of Tascatecal, named Chichimecatle, whom I mentioned above as having brought the timber that was prepared in that province for the brigantines, had from the beginning of the siege resided with all his people in the camp of Pedro de Alvarado; and seeing that since the defeat the Spaniards had not behaved with their accustomed spirit, he determined to enter the city without them, and attack the enemy.—Leaving four hundred archers of his own people at a dangerous passage of water in the road where a bridge had been destroyed, from which he had driven the enemy, (an event that had not before occurred without our aid,) he pressed forward with his men, who fought with great bravery, uttering loud cries, and calling out the names of their province and lord. There were many wounded and killed on both sides; and the enemy believed that they would be able to capture the whole force; for, as they retreated in unbroken order, the Tlascalans pursued with great resolution, and the Mexicans expected to wreak

their vengeance upon them after they had crossed a water-pass, where the danger was always certain. But Chichimecatle, with a view to this emergency, had left the four hundred bowmen at this pass for his support; and when in their retreat the Tlascalans reached this place, the enemy suddenly charged upon them, but they leaped into the water and with the aid of the bowmen escaped. The enemy returned to the city, astonished at the resistance they had met with, and the boldness that Chichimecatle had shown.

CHAPTER V.

Two days after the expedition against Marinalco, of which I have given your Majesty an account in the foregoing pages, there arrived at our camp ten Indians of the Otumies, who were slaves to the city, but having become subjects of your Majesty now every day assisted us in fighting. They brought us word that the caciques of the province of Matalcingo, their neighbors, had made war upon them and laid waste their country, having burned a town and carried off some of the inhabitants, being resolved to destroy all in their power; and that it was their intention to attack our camps, when the inhabitants of the city would sally forth and put an end to us. We gave the more credit to this account, because, for a few days past, every time we entered the city for a hostile purpose, we had encountered some of the people of the province of Matalcingo, concerning which we had little information except that it was extensive, and about twenty-two leagues from our quarters. In the complaint made to us against their neighbors by the Otumies, they gave us to understand that they wished us to send them succor; and although they asked it at a very unfavorable time, yet trusting in God's aid, and in order to break somewhat the wings of the enemy, who every day threatened us with hostilities from that people, and manifested the expectations they had of assistance, which could come from no other quarter, I determined to despatch thither Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor, with

eighteen horse and one hundred foot, and one bowman; who accordingly departed with these troops and a party of the Otumies, our allies. God knows the danger which they encountered in this expedition, and also to which we who remained behind were exposed; but as it was the best policy for us to exhibit greater courage and resolution than ever, and even to die in arms, we concealed our weakness as well from our allies as from the enemy; and often, very often, have I heard the Spanish soldiers declare, that they only wished it would please God to spare their lives, and make them conquerors of the city, although they should derive no interest nor advantage from it; from which it will be seen to what extremity we were reduced, and on what a slender chance we held our persons and lives.

The alguazil mayor proceeded that day to a town of the Otumies, on the frontiers of Marinalco, where he slept; and the next morning resumed his march, and arrived at an encampment of the Otumies, which he found deserted and partially burnt. Advancing to more level ground, he discovered a large body of the enemy near a stream, who had just set fire to another town; as soon as they saw him, they began to fly; and on the road they took, our people found in their rear large quantities of maize and the roasted flesh of children, which they had for provisions, but abandoned as soon as they saw the Spaniards. Having passed a stream that flowed in front of the plain, the enemy began to hold up, when the alguazil mayor with his horsemen attacked and routed them; in their fright they took the road to Matalcingo, which was about three leagues distant. The cavalry continued the pursuit until they shut themselves up in the town, where they waited the coming of the Spanish infantry and our

allies, who were occupied in slaying those whom the cavalry had left behind. In this rout more than two thousand of the enemy perished. The infantry and allies, exceeding seventy thousand men, having reached the place where the cavalry had halted, began to advance towards the town, in which the enemy rallied, having placed their women, children and effects safe in a fortified place on a lofty height near at hand. But when our force rushed furiously upon them, they retreated to the fort which occupied a strong position on a steep and rough declivity. The town was burnt and plundered in a very short time, and as it was evening, the alguazil mayor was not desirous of attacking the fort, especially as the men were weary, having been fighting the whole day. The enemy spent all the night in shouting and making a constant din with horns and kettle drums.

The next morning the alguazil mayor led the way up to the enemies' fort, though with the fear of encountering a formidable resistance; but when they reached the place, none of the enemy were to be seen; and some of our Indian allies came down from the summit of the hill and informed us that there was no one left, but all the enemy had gone away at early dawn. At the same time there were many people on the surrounding plains, but these were Otumies; the cavalry believing them to be enemies, rode towards them and struck three or four with their lances; and as the language of the Otumies is different from that of Culua, they were not understood until they threw down their arms and approached the Spaniards, and even then three or four of them were pierced with lances; but they were well aware that it happened from their not being known. Contrary to the expectations of the enemy, the Spaniards permitted them

to go to their other town, which was also hostile; but when they saw so great a force had come against them, they sued for peace; and the alguazil mayor addressed the cacique of that place, saying that he knew I would receive favorably all that came and offered themselves as subjects of your Majesty, although they were guilty; and he asked him to go and advise the people of Matalcingo to come to me, which he promised to do, and also to propose terms of peace to the people of Marinalco. The alguazil mayor, having been thus successful, returned to his camp.

At that time whens ome of our troops were fighting in the city, the inhabitants sent to request our interpreter to come to them, as they were desirous of treating for peace; which, however, it appeared they did not want except on the condition that we should entirely abandon the country. This they did that we might be induced to afford them some rest, and enable them to provide themselves with what they wanted; although they seemed to be always ready for a contest whenever we gave them occasion. While they were thus parleying with our interpreter, and our men were at no great distance from them, being separated by only a broken bridge, an old man of their number, in the sight of all, drew forth from a capacious wallet certain things which he eat, thereby giving us to understand that they were not in want, because our people had told them they would perish with hunger. Our allies then assured the Spaniards that their proposals for peace were all a pretence, and would have renewed hostilities; but there was no more fighting that day, the leaders of the enemy desiring to communicate with me.

Four days after the return of the alguazil mayor from

Matalcingo, the caciques of that province and Marinalco, and of the province of Cuiscon, which is large and of great importance, and whose people had also been rebellious, entered our camp, and asked us to pardon the past, promising to be faithful hereafter, as they accordingly were, and have continued to this day.

While the alguazil mayor was engaged in his expedition to Matalcingo, the inhabitants of the city resolved to sally forth by night, and attack the camp of Alvarado: and at early dawn they made the assault. As soon as the sentinels, both horse and foot, discovered them, they sounded the alarm, "*to arms!*" and the troops that were on the spot rushed upon the enemy, who, when they saw the cavalry, threw themselves into the water, and in the mean time our troops came up and fought with them for three hours. But when we heard in our camp the report of the field-piece that was fired, we had some fear that our men would not be able to repulse the enemy; and I therefore ordered an attack upon the city, in order to draw them off from the contest with Alvarado; and as the Indians found the Spaniards in that quarter so resolute, they determined to return to the city, where we made a descent the same day.

At that time those of us who had been wounded in the defeat were recovered; the ship of Juan Ponce de Leon had arrived at Villa Rica, after being driven from the continent or island of Florida;* and the inhabitants of that city sent me some powder and cross-bows, of which we were in extreme want; although, thanks to God, there was not left a single country in the whole land about us that had not declared in our favor. But seeing that the inhabitants of this city were so rebellious, and

* The same navigator discovered Florida a few years before.

discovered greater signs of a determination to perish than any people ever had done before, I knew of no middle course to take with them in order to rid ourselves of so many dangers and hardships without utterly destroying both them and their city, which was the most beautiful object in the world. It was in vain to tell them that we would never remove our camp, and that our brigantines would never cease to carry on the war by water; or that we had reduced Matalcingo and Marinalco, and there were none left throughout the whole land to succor them, nor any place from which they could obtain maize, meat, fruits, water, or any thing else for their support. The more we made these appeals to them, the less indications they gave of weakness; but, on the other hand, in fighting and all their stratagems for defence, we found them displaying greater spirit than ever. In this state of things, considering that it was now more than forty-five days since we had invested the place, I resolved to take means for our security, and to enable us to press the enemy more closely, namely, that as we gained the streets of the city, we should destroy all the houses on both sides; so that we should not advance a step without leaving all level with the ground, and converting what was water into firm land, notwithstanding the delay that might ensue. For this purpose I assembled the lords and chiefs of our allies, and informed them of my determination, to the end that they might send a great number of their laborers with their *coas*, which are implements of wood, of which they make as much use as is made in Spain of the spade in digging. They answered, that they would do so very willingly, and that it was an excellent project, with which they were much pleased, for it seemed to them that it was a means by

which the city could be completely destroyed, which they had all desired more than any thing in the world.

Two or three days passed while we were concerting our plans; and the inhabitants of the city were well aware that we were devising some scheme against them. They too, as it afterwards appeared, were preparing such means as they could for their defence, as we imagined at the time. Having settled with our allies to make the assault by land and water, the next morning after mass we took the road to the city; and on arriving at the water-pass and entrenchment in the vicinity of the large buildings on the square, when about to commence hostilities, we were accosted by some of the people and desired to suspend hostilities, as they intended to sue for peace. I then directed the men to refrain from fighting, and calling to the enemy, said that the sovereign of the city should come and confer with me there, and issue an order for peace to be declared. After they assured me that some one had gone to call the cacique, I was detained more than an hour; because in truth they had no desire for peace, and thus it turned out—for soon, while we were remaining inactive, they began to pour upon us a shower of arrows, darts, and stones. Directly on seeing this, I attacked the entrenchment, which we carried; and on entering the square, we found it filled with large stones, rendering it difficult for the horses to pass, as they require firm ground for their movements in war. We found several streets thus obstructed with stones to embarrass the horses. From that day we had so filled up this street of water leading from the square that the Indians never afterwards reopened it; and henceforth we began by degrees to destroy the houses and to obstruct and close up what we had

gained of the ditches and canals. As that day we mustered more than one hundred and fifty thousand warriors a great deal was accomplished; after which we returned to the camp. The brigantines and the canoes of our allies had also done much injury to the city, and now sought repose.

The day following we entered the city in the same order, and penetrated as far as the enclosure and grand court of the temple, where the towers of the Indians are situated. I ordered the captains to employ their men in filling up the canals, and levelling the difficult passes that we had gained; some of our allies I directed to burn and destroy the houses, and others to engage the enemy in those quarters where we were accustomed to meet them, and the cavalry to take a position in the rear as a guard to the whole. I ascended the highest tower, that the Indians might know me, as I was sensible that it would disturb them much to see me in that place. From thence I animated our allies, and caused them to be relieved when it was necessary; for as they were constantly engaged, sometimes the enemy would retreat and sometimes the allies; in the latter case three or four of the cavalry came to their support, who gave them fresh ardor and courage to return to the attack.

In this manner we entered the city five or six days in succession; and always in retreating placed our allies in front. Some of the infantry we posted in ambush in the houses, while we left the cavalry to bring up the rear. The order for a retreat was given so that all moved at once, in order to vacate the square. By this means and the ambuscades of the infantry, every evening we killed some with our lances. On one occasion seven or eight horse had remained behind in the square waiting

for the enemy to sally forth, who not making their appearance, they pretended to retreat. The enemy from fear that they would turn about and charge upon them as usual, had taken refuge behind walls and on terraces in great numbers. And when the cavalry, now eight or nine in number, turned about to pursue them, a part of the enemy having succeeded in taking possession of the entrance to a street on high ground, our men were unable to follow them as they fled along that street, but were compelled to resume their retreat. The enemy, elated with having forced us to retire, were seized with a sort of frenzy, but acted with such prudence that they confined themselves to situations from which they could not be reached, while the cavalry suffered great annoyance from the troops posted behind walls, and were compelled to leave the ground with two horses wounded. This occurrence led me to order a strong ambuscade, as I shall hereafter relate to your Majesty. On that evening we returned to our camp, after having well secured all that we had taken, while the enemy exulted in the belief that our retreat had been caused by fear. The same evening I sent a messenger to the alguazil mayor, directing him to come to our camp with fifteen horse from his own division and that of Pedro de Alvarado.

The next morning the alguazil mayor arrived with fifteen horsemen, and I had with me twenty-five others from the division of Cuyoacan, making forty altogether. Ten of these I ordered to sally forth in the morning with our main force, and in connexion with the brigantines, to attack the enemy and demolish the houses of the city in the usual manner, to as great an extent as possible; and I proposed to come up with the other thirty horse when it would be time for them to retire. I also directed them,

that as soon as they knew as much of the city to have been destroyed as was possible in that time, to pursue the enemy by a quick movement until they took refuge in their entrenchments, and beyond the water-streets, where they should keep them till the hour for leaving the city. In the mean time, I would throw my party of thirty horse, without being observed, into an ambuscade in some of the large buildings near those on the square. The Spanish troops faithfully obeyed my directions; and at one o'clock in the afternoon, I took the road to the city with thirty horse, and having reached it, I posted them in certain buildings, while I went myself and ascended to the top of a lofty tower in my usual manner. Some Spaniards who were there opened a tomb, and found in it the value of more than 1500 castellanos in articles of gold. When the hour had arrived for retiring from the city, I directed our people to fall back in the best order, and that as soon as they reached the square, the cavalry should show a disposition to attack the enemy, but with the appearance of not daring to do so. This demonstra- was made when the enemy had collected in great numbers about the square and on it. The men in ambush were already impatient for the hour to arrive for their movement, being eager to acquit themselves well and weary of delay. I now joined them, as the Spanish foot and horse with our Indian allies, (to whom the ambush was known,) were retiring from the square, and the enemy were in full pursuit, shouting as if they had gained the greatest victory in the world. The nine horsemen made a feint of attacking them, and then hastily retired; after they had repeated this at two different times, the enemy were thrown into such a fury that they rushed upon the horsemen, and pursued them until they had passed the

entrance of the street where we were concealed in ambush. As soon as we saw the Spaniards pass on beyond us, and heard the report of a musket, which had been agreed upon as a signal, we knew it was time to sally forth; and calling aloud "*Señor Santiago*," we fell rudely upon the enemy, and drove them towards the square, attacking them with lances, overthrowing and cutting off great numbers that fell into the hands of our allies, who joined in the pursuit. Thus, by means of this ambuscade, more than fifteen hundred of the enemy were slain, all persons of distinguished rank and valor; and that night our allies were well supplied for their supper, as they took the bodies of the slain and cut them up for food. Such was the consternation of the enemy on account of this unexpected rout, that they neither spoke nor shouted during the whole evening, nor dared to appear in any street or on any terrace that was not removed from danger.

As it was almost night when we retreated, the enemy ordered certain slaves, as it afterwards appeared, to watch whether we actually retired or not; and when some of them began to appear in one of the streets, ten or twelve horsemen attacked them, and pursued them so closely that not one escaped. The enemy were so much alarmed by this victory of ours that they never ventured again, during the whole war, to enter the square when we retired from it, although but a single horseman was left there; nor did they dare to pursue an Indian or a footsoldier belonging to our force, from the apprehension of another ambush. The events of this day, and the victory God our Lord granted us, were the principal cause of the city being earlier gained, the inhabitants having been struck with dismay, and our friends reani-

mated; so that we returned to our camp with the determination of hastening the operations of the war, and not suffering a day to elapse without entering the city until the war was at an end. During that day our division met with no loss except that at the moment we left our ambush some horsemen came in collision, and one of them falling from his mare, the animal ran directly to the enemy, who let fly their arrows and wounded her so badly, that disliking her reception she returned to us, and the same night died. Although this circumstance was a matter of regret, inasmuch as our life depended on our horses and mares; yet it was less so than if the mare had died in the hands of the enemy, as we were led to expect; for if this had been the case, the enemy would have derived from it more joy than they had experienced grief from our success against them. The brigantines and the canoes of our allies had committed great ravages in the city on that day without having suffered any loss.

We had already known that the Indians of the city were much disheartened, and we now learned from the report of two inconsiderable persons who came out to our camp by night, that the people were perishing with hunger; and that they employed the night in fishing amongst the houses of the city, and in seeking in the quarter we had captured for wood, and for herbs and roots to eat. As we had filled up many of the canals, and removed numerous other obstacles to our progress, I resolved to enter the city at early dawn, and do all the injury I could. The brigantines also sallied forth before daylight, while I with twelve or fifteen horse, a body of foot, and our allies, entered hastily, and stationed several scouts, who, when it was light and we were concealed in ambush, gave a signal, at which we rushed forth, and

attacked an immense multitude of the enemy. But they consisted of a miserable class of people, who had gone out to seek for food, most of them unarmed, and women and children, of whom more than eight hundred were either killed or made prisoners in our route through that quarter of the city. The brigantines also took many prisoners, as well as canoes that were engaged in fishing, and committed great ravages upon the enemy. When the captains and principal persons of the city saw us making our usual progress through it, they had been so much struck with terror by the former ambush, that none dared to attack us; and so we returned to the camp with much spoil and food for our allies.

The next morning we returned to the city; and as our allies had seen the order and regularity with which we proceeded in destroying it, the multitude that accompanied us was innumerable. This day we at length obtained possession of the whole street of Tacuba, and repaired all the breaches in it, so that the division of Pedro de Alvarado could communicate with us by the city; and two other bridges were gained by the principal street leading to the market place. The water was filled up, and the palace of the cacique of the city burnt. He was a young man of eighteen years of age, named Guatimucin, who was the second since the death of Muteczuma. In these buildings the Indians had fortified themselves, as they were large, strong, and surrounded by water. We also gained two other bridges on other streets, that were adjacent to that leading to the market place, and filled up many ditches, so that three of the four quarters of the city were now in our possession, and the Indians could only retreat to the strongest, which comprised the houses most enclosed by water.

The following day, which was that of the Apostle St. James, [July 25th,] we entered the city in the usual order and passed along the great street to the market-place. We succeeded in gaining a very broad street of water, which the enemy had considered perfectly secure; it detained us a long time, and was of a dangerous character; so that we were unable in all this day to fill it up, and make it passable for the cavalry. As we were all on foot, and the Indians saw that the horse had not passed over, they made a fresh attack upon us, many of them discovering great bravery; but we resisted them successfully, and they returned to their entrenchments and fortified places, though many of them were wounded with arrows. The Spanish foot were also armed with pikes, which I had ordered to be made after the great defeat and found to be highly useful. On this day nothing was heard on either side of the principal street but the burning and demolition of houses, which it was painful to behold; but our purposes required it, and it was necessary to proceed in this way. When the inhabitants saw such havoc going on in order to compel them to submission, they told our allies, who were actively engaged in burning and destroying, that they would have the labor of rebuilding; for if they (the Mexicans) prevailed, they knew it would be so; and if not, they would have to build them for us. It pleased God that the truth of the last declaration should be confirmed, for they proved to be the persons employed to rebuild the city.

At an early hour the next morning we entered the city in the usual manner, and having reached the passage of water which we had commenced filling up the day before, we found it in the same state in which it had been left. We proceeded two bowshots, and gained possession of

two large ditches, that had been excavated in the solid earth of the same street; we then went to a small tower of idols, in which we found several heads of Christians, being those of our men whom they had killed; a spectacle that excited in us the deepest sorrow. From this tower, the street led directly to the causeway of Sandoval's camp; and on the left hand, another street ran to the market place, in which there was no water except a single ditch that they defended. We proceeded no farther that day, but fought much with the Indians. As God our Lord always granted us victory, the enemy as constantly felt our superiority. As soon as it was evening, we returned to our camp.

As we were getting ready the next day for returning to the city at nine o'clock, we saw from our camp a smoke issuing from two very lofty towers that stood in the Tlatebulco, or market-place of the city, and were unable to imagine what it could be; as it seemed much greater than the fumigations the Indians are accustomed to make to their idols, we conjectured that the division of Pedro de Alvarado had arrived there, but although this was really the case, we could not bring ourselves to credit it. Most certainly on that day Pedro de Alvarado and his party conducted in a very gallant manner, for there were many bridges and entrenchments to be carried, and the greater part of the city always aided in defending them. But when he saw that we had gone on straitening the enemy from our quarter, he labored to the utmost of his ability to enter the market-place, since the chief strength of the enemy was concentrated at that point; he was not able, however, to do more than penetrate within sight of it, and take those towers, and several others adjacent to the market-place, which itself is as broad as the en-

closed courts of many towers of the city. Finding his cavalry unable to make much progress, he was compelled to retire, and in his retreat he had three horses wounded. Thus Pedro de Alvarado and his men returned to their quarters. We made no attempt that day to gain the single bridge and canal, which were all that remained between us and the market-place, but spent the time in levelling and filling up all the difficult places; when we retired, the enemy pressed us closely, but it was done at their own cost.

The next morning early we entered the city, and as there was nothing to be gained before arriving at the market-place but a passage of water with its entrenchment, near the little tower I have mentioned, we began the contest, when an ensign with two or three Spaniards leapt into the water, and the enemy immediately abandoned the place. We commenced filling up at once, and making preparations so as to cross with the horses; and while thus engaged, Pedro de Alvarado arrived by the same street with four horsemen, and great was the joy on the part of his division and our own; for the road was now open to a speedy termination of the war. Pedro de Alvarado had left in his rear a detachment of men both to secure what had been gained and for his own protection; and as soon as the passage was rendered fordable, I proceeded with several horse to look at the market-place, having first directed the people of our party not to advance beyond this passage. We then went on and passed through the square, admiring its arcades, the terraces of which were filled with the enemy, who, when they saw the horsemen riding in it, (as it is of great extent,) were afraid to approach us. I ascended a tower adjoining the market-place, in which and others we found as offerings to their idols the heads of our Christians who

had been killed, and of the Tlascallan Indians, our allies, between whom and the Mexicans a very old and deadly feud existed. From that tower I surveyed the portions of the city that had fallen into our hands, comprising without doubt seven eighths of the whole; and seeing that it was not possible for so many people to subsist in such a narrow space, especially as the houses that remained to them were small, and every one placed by itself on the water; and above all, considering the great famine that prevailed amongst them of which the half-eaten roots and bark of trees that we found in the streets afforded ample proof; I determined to discontinue hostilities for some days, and to offer some conditions by which so great a multitude might be saved from destruction; and as it certainly occasioned me much sorrow and regret to continue to harass them, I constantly urged them to make terms of peace. But they declared that they would not by any means accept them, and that the only thing left for them was to die with arms in their hands; that we should have nothing of all they possessed, but they would burn and sink in the water every thing they had, whence it should never reappear. Thereupon, not being disposed to render evil for evil, I dissembled my feelings by forbearing to attack them.

As we had but little powder left, we had been planning for more than fifteen days the construction of a battering engine; and though I had no mechanics who knew how to make one, some carpenters undertook to construct a small machine, which I had no idea we should be able to use. In the course of a few days, during which we held the Indians in straitened quarters, we completed it, and brought it to be placed in the square of the market, on a building resembling a theatre,

which is in the centre of the square, made of stone and mortar, about fifteen feet in height and thirty paces from angle to angle. This structure is intended to be used at their festivals and sports, so that the actors on those occasions being placed upon it may be easily seen by all the people in the market-place, both above and below the arcades. When the machine was brought there, a delay of several days took place in adapting it to its situation, during which time our Indian allies threatened the inhabitants that by means of it we should destroy them all. Had no other effect been produced by this engine but to alarm the people, which we hoped would have led to a surrender, it would have been sufficient; but no such result flowed from it, for neither the carpenters completed their design, nor were the enemy, although they feared it, induced to make any proposals of submission, and we concealed from them the defects of the machine by pretending that out of compassion towards them we forbore to use it for their destruction.

The day after depositing the battering engine in the market-place, on entering the city, as three or four days had elapsed since the cessation of hostilities, we found the streets through which we passed filled with women, children, and other wretched objects, dying of hunger, and wandering about with distressed and haggard looks, presenting the most melancholy spectacle in the world; and I ordered our allies to do them no harm. But none of the warriors made their appearance where it was possible for them to receive any injury, though we saw them on the terraces, covered with the mantles they are accustomed to wear, and without arms. I sent them this day proposals of peace, but their answers were deceptive; and as they had wasted the greater part of the

day in this business, I informed them that it was my intention to attack them, and desired that they would cause their people to retire, otherwise I should give our allies leave to destroy them. They replied, that they desired peace; to which I rejoined that I did not see amongst them the cacique with whom I was to treat, but if he would come I would give every pledge for his safety, and treat of peace. When we discovered that it was all a trick, and that they were prepared to fight us, after having many times warned them that I would bring them into closer quarters, and reduce them to severer necessities, I ordered Pedro de Alvarado to enter with all his force into one part of an extensive quarter of the city still occupied by the enemy, in which there were more than a thousand houses; and I entered another part of it on foot with my own men, because we were unable to approach it on horseback. The battle was so fiercely fought, both by us and our allies, that we gained possession of the whole district; and so great was the mortality amongst our enemies, that the number killed and made prisoners exceed twelve thousand souls. Our allies practised such cruelty towards the enemy, that they spared the lives of none, although greatly reproved and punished by us for their want of humanity.

Returning to the city the following day, I ordered hostilities to be suspended, and the enemy left undisturbed. When their leaders saw so great a multitude arrayed against them, and knew they had assembled for the purpose of destroying the citizens and those whom they were accustomed to command; when they beheld the extreme necessities of their people, and that they had no resting place but on the dead bodies of their countrymen; being desirous of avoiding so great a calamity,

they addressed our people and said, that as we had not yet put an end to them they wished me to be called in great haste, for they desired to confer with me. As all the Spaniards desired this war to be brought to a conclusion, and deplored the unhappy effects attending it, they were much pleased with this announcement, thinking that the Indians sought peace; and they came to call and importune me to go to a certain entrenchment, where were some of the leaders of the enemy who wished to confer with me. Although I was aware that my going would have little effect, I was determined to go as desired, being at the same time sensible that the refusal to surrender rested solely with the cacique and three or four nobles of the city, for the rest of the people, living or dead, had already desired a deliverance. When arrived at the entrenchment, they said to me: "That since they regarded me as the offspring of the sun, and the sun in so short a space of time as one day and one night revolved around the whole world, I ought therefore to despatch them out of life in as brief a space as possible, and thus deliver them from their troubles; for they desired to die and go to Heaven to their Orchilobus, who was waiting to receive them into a state of peaceful repose." This is the idol for which they entertain the highest veneration. I answered in terms designed to induce them to surrender, but without effect, although they saw in us more indications and signs of peace than were ever shown to a conquered people before, we with the aid of our Lord being conquerors.

The enemy being reduced to the last extremity, as may be inferred from what is above related, in order to shake their resolution, as they seemed bent on death, I conferred with a personage of high rank amongst them

who was a prisoner, having been taken two or three days before by an uncle of Don Fernando, lord of Tezcuco, while fighting in the city, and severely wounded; and I asked him if he wished to return to the city? he answered, yes; and when the next day we entered it, I sent him with some Spaniards who would deliver him to the inhabitants. With this person of rank I conferred much, in order that he might address the cacique and other important personages on the subject of peace; and he promised me that he would do every thing in his power. He was received by the inhabitants with great respect as a person of high standing; but when he was taken before Guautimucin, his lord, and began to address him on the subject of peace, he immediately ordered him to be slain and sacrificed. The answer we were expecting was given by them in loud cries, vociferating that "death was all they wished;" when they began to assail us with a shower of darts, arrows and stones, and to fight furiously, so much so that they killed one of our horses with a *dalle* that a man carried, made of one of our swords; but in the end it cost them dear, for many of them fell. After this we returned to our camp.

The next day we returned to the city; but the enemy were so much reduced that great numbers of our allies had ventured to pass the night there. When arrived in sight of the enemy, we no longer sought to contend with them, but went deliberately through the city; for we expected every hour and every moment that they would come to us with offers of peace. In order to lead them to this step, I rode to an entrenchment of theirs, which was very strong, and called to certain chiefs who were behind it, whom I knew, and said—"Since they saw themselves in a desperate situation, and knew that if I

pleased in one hour none of them would be left alive, why would not Guautimucin, their lord, come to confer with me, on my promising not to injure him; for should he and they seek peace, they would be well received and treated by me." I exchanged other words with them, and even drew tears from their eyes, when they answered—"That they were fully conscious of their error and hopeless condition, and they would go to speak with their lord, and return instantly with an answer; and requested me to remain where I was." They went away, but came back in a few moments, and said—"That as it was now evening, their lord had not come to confer with me; but that in the middle of the next day he would come at all events, and confer with me in the square of the market-place;" so we returned to our camp. I gave directions for the next day that they should get ready a carpeted seat, as is their custom, on the rectangular building in the middle of the square for the cacique and the chief men of the city, and that a repast should be prepared, as was accordingly done.

The next morning we went to the city, and I cautioned our people to be on their guard, in case the inhabitants should be guilty of any treachery, that we might not be taken by surprise. I also gave the same caution to Pedro de Alvarado, who was there; and when we reached the market-place, I sent a message to Guautimucin, informing him that I waited his coming. It appeared, however, that he had determined not to come, but sent to me five of the principal nobles of the city, whose names I omit to mention as a matter of no great consequence. These persons having arrived said, "that their lord had sent them to beg me to pardon him for not coming, as he was afraid to appear before me, and also was in bad health;

but that he had deputed others, who would perform whatever I should command. We were gratified by the appearance of these nobles, although the cacique himself did not appear; for the road seemed now open to a speedy conclusion of difficulties in this whole affair. I received them with a cheerful countenance, and immediately ordered them to be served with something to eat and drink, when they exhibited proofs of the want and privation they had endured. After they had finished their repast, I bade them tell their sovereign that there was no occasion for his fears, and that I would promise before he came into my presence to do him no injury, nor detain him; but that without him nothing could be effected with perfect agreement and good understanding. I directed provisions to be given them to take to their lord; and they promised to do every thing in their power to promote the object in view; and so they departed. In two hours they returned, bringing me some fine mantles of cotton, such as they wore, and informed me that Guautimucin, their lord, would by no means come, nor did he desire to do so, but wished to be excused from conferring on the subject in question. I then repeated to them, that I knew no cause why he should fear to come before me, when he saw that I treated well the persons who to my knowledge had been the chief promoters of the war, whom I suffered to go and come in safety without receiving the slightest harm; and I begged them to return and urge him much to make his appearance, as it would be for his interest, and I would render it of great advantage to him. They consented to do so, and promised to return the next day with his answer. So they went away, and we returned to our camp.

Early the next morning some nobles visited our camp,

and desired me to go to the square of the market-place in the city, for their lord wished to confer with me there. Supposing it to be true, I mounted a horse, and we took the road to the city; but after waiting more than three or four hours at the appointed place, he failed to appear. As soon as I perceived the deception, and that neither the lord nor any other messengers came, I sent for our Indian allies who had remained at the entrance of the city, about a league from where we were, agreeably to my orders, being informed that the inhabitants desired to treat with me for peace, and I should not want them within the city; they came to me immediately, together with the troops of Pedro de Alvarado's camp. As soon as these troops arrived, we attacked some entrenchments and ditches, the only defences that remained in the enemy's power; and both we and our allies took possession of as many of them as we wished. At the time I left the camp, I had made arrangements for Gonzalo de Sandoval to enter with the brigantines that part of the city where the Indians were strongly fortified, and when the enemy were surrounded, to delay the attack until he saw our division engaged; so that being thus closely invested and pressed on every side, they might have no space left for them to move, except over dead bodies, and on the terraces that remained to them; being for the same reason destitute of arrows, darts and stones with which to annoy us. Our allies marched with us, armed with sword and buckler; and such was the havoc made, both by land and sea, that more than forty thousand souls perished or were made prisoners that day; and so piercing were the cries and lamentations of women and children that every heart was moved, and we had even more to do to restrain our allies from the slaughter and the practice of excessive cruelty, than to fight the enemy; the people of this country being

addicted to a cruelty exceeding what had ever been known in any generation, and violating in a greater degree the laws of nature and humanity. Our allies took this day an immense quantity of spoil, which we could in no wise prevent, for we were but nine hundred Spaniards, while they amounted to more than one hundred and fifty thousand men, and no care or attention on our part sufficed to prevent them from plundering, although we did all in our power. One reason why I had been desirous on previous days to effect an arrangement with the inhabitants, was, that they might not throw their treasure into the water, and thus lead our allies to commit depredations on whatever they could find; as I feared that by this means your Majesty would gain but a small portion of the great wealth contained in this city according to my previous representations. It being now late in the day, and the pestilential odor of the dead bodies becoming insupportable, from their having lain about the streets for several days, we returned to our camp. The same evening I planned that on our return to the city the next day, we should take with us three pieces of ordnance, as I feared that the enemy being crowded into so narrow quarters, and having no room to move, would endeavor to drown the Spaniards without striking a blow, when they sought to carry their defences by storm; and on this account I proposed to annoy them with the guns from a distance, whenever they should sally forth against us. I also ordered the alguazil mayor to be in readiness with the brigantines on the following day to enter a large basin which was situated amongst the houses of the city, where all their canoes were collected; and as so few houses remained to the enemy, in which the lord of the city could take refuge, it might happen that he would embark

in a canoe with some of his nobles, without knowing what course to take. We thus made our arrangements for entering the city on the following morning.

As soon as it was day, I caused our whole force to be in readiness, and the heavy guns to be brought out; and the day before I had ordered Pedro de Alvarado to wait for me in the square of the market-place, and not to attack the enemy until I arrived. Being all assembled, and the brigantines drawn up ready for action on the right of the houses situated on the water, where the enemy were stationed, I directed that when they heard the discharge of a musket the land force should enter the small part of the city that remained to be taken and drive the enemy towards the water where the brigantines lay; and I enjoined much upon them to look for Guautimucin, and endeavor to take him alive, as in that case the war would cease. I then ascended a terrace, and before the combat began addressed some of the nobles whom I knew, asking them "for what reason their lord refused to come to me, when they were reduced to such extremities?" adding, "that there was no good cause why they should all perish, and that they should go and call him, and have no fears." Two of the principal nobles then went to call their lord. After a short time there returned with them one of the most considerable of all these personages, named Ciguacoacin, a captain and governor over them all, by whose counsels the whole affairs of the war were conducted; and I received him with great kindness, that he might feel perfectly secure and free from apprehensions. At last he said, "that the cacique would by no means come into my presence, preferring rather to die; and that his determination grieved him much, but that I must do whatever I desired;" and

when I saw that this was his settled purpose, I told the noble messenger to return to his friends, and prepare for the renewal of the war, which I was resolved to continue until their destruction was complete. So he departed.

More than five hours had been spent in these conferences, during which time many of the inhabitants were crowded together upon piles of the dead, some were on the water, and others were seen swimming about, or drowning in the part of the lake where the canoes were lying, which was of considerable extent. Indeed, so excessive were the sufferings of the people, that no one could imagine how they were able to sustain them; and an immense multitude of men, women and children were compelled to seek refuge with us; many of whom in their eagerness to reach us threw themselves into the water, and were drowned amongst the mass of dead bodies. It appeared that the number of persons who had perished, either from drinking salt water, from famine or pestilence, amounted altogether to more than fifty thousand souls. In order to conceal their necessitous condition from our knowledge, the bodies of the dead were not thrown into the water, lest the brigantines should come in contact with them; nor were they taken away from the places where they had died, lest we should see them about the city. But in those streets where they had perished, we found heaps of dead bodies so frequent that a person passing could not avoid stepping on them; and when the people of the city flocked towards us, I caused Spaniards to be stationed through all the streets to prevent our allies from destroying the wretched persons who came out in such multitudes. I also charged the captains of our allies to forbid, by all means in their power, the slaughter of these fugitives; yet all my pre-

cautions were insufficient to prevent it, and that day more than fifteen thousand lost their lives. At the same time the better classes and the warriors of the city were pent up within narrow limits, confined to a few terraces and houses, or sought refuge on the water, but no concealment prevented our seeing their miserable condition and weakness with sufficient clearness. As the evening approached, and no signs of their surrender appeared, I ordered the two pieces of ordnance to be levelled towards the enemy to try their effect in causing them to yield: but they suffered greater injury when full license was given to the allies to attack them than from the cannon, although the latter did them some mischief. As this was of little avail, I ordered the musketry to be fired; when a certain angular space where they were crowded together was gained, and some of the people thrown into the water; those that remained there yielded themselves prisoners without a struggle. In the mean time, the brigantines suddenly entered that part of the lake, and broke through the midst of the fleet of canoes, the warriors who were in them not daring to make any resistance. It pleased God, that the captain of a brigantine, named Garci Holguin came up behind a canoe in which there seemed to be persons of distinction; and when the archers who were stationed in the bow of the brigantine took aim at those in the canoe, they made a signal that the cacique was there, that the men might not discharge their arrows; instantly our people leaped into the canoe, and seized in it Guautimucin, and the lord of Tacuba, together with other distinguished persons that accompanied the cacique. Immediately after this occurrence, Garci Holguin, the captain, delivered to me on a terrace adjoining the lake, where I was standing, the cacique of

the city with other noble prisoners; who, as I bade him sit down, without showing any asperity of manner, came up to me, and said in his own tongue, "That he had done all that was incumbent on him in defence of himself and his people, until he was reduced to his present condition; that now I might do with him as I pleased." He then laid his hand on a poniard that I wore, telling me to strike him to the heart. I spoke encouragingly to him, and bade him have no fears.* Thus the cacique being taken a prisoner, the war ceased at this point, which it pleased God our Lord to bring to a conclusion on Tuesday, Saint Hippolytus' day, the thirteenth of August, 1521. So that from the day when the city was first invested, the 30th of May in that year, until it was taken, seventy-five

* Humboldt gives the following account of his endeavors, when in Mexico, to ascertain the place where the capture of Guatimotzin occurred:—"Strangers are shown the bridge of Clerigo, near the great square of Tlatelolco, as the memorable spot where the last Aztec king Quauhtemotzin, nephew of his predecessor, king Cuitlahuatzin, and son in law of Montezuma II., was taken. But the result of the most careful researches which myself and the padre Pichardo could make was, that the young king fell into the hands of Garci Holguin in a great basin of water which was formerly between the Garita del Peralvilla, the square of Santiago de Tlatelolco, and the bridge of Amexac. Cortes happened to be on the terrace of a house of Tlatelolco when the young king was brought a prisoner to him. 'I made him sit down,' says the conqueror in his third letter to the emperor, Charles V., 'and I treated him with confidence; but the young man put his hand on the poniard which I wore at my side, and exhorted me to kill him, because, since he had done all that his duty to himself and his people demanded of him, he had no other desire but death.' This trait is worthy of the best days of Greece and Rome. Under every zone, whatever may be the complexion of men, the language of strong hearts struggling with misfortune is the same. We have already seen what was the tragical end of this unfortunate Quauhtemotzin."

We annex the original of these concluding remarks out of justice to the eminent author:—"Ce trait est digne du plus beau temps de la Grèce et de Rome. Sous toutes les zones, quelle que soit la couleur des hommes, le langage des âmes fortes est le même lorsqu' elles luttent contre le malheur. Nous avons vu plus haut quelle fut la fin tragique de cet infortuné Quauhtemotzin!"—*Nouv. Esp.* p. 192, 4to. ed.

days had elapsed; during which time your Majesty will see what labors, dangers, and calamities your subjects endured; and their deeds afford the best evidence how much they exposed their lives.*

* The anniversary of the capture of Guatimotzin, and the consequent fall of the city, was regularly observed with great pomp and ceremony at Mexico during the three centuries of Spanish rule; but since the revolution, and the predominance of the Indian interest, all this has been changed.

Note. The reader is desired to refer to the description of the city and lakes at page 111, in connexion with the above Plan.

CHAPTER VI.

During all these seventy-five days of the siege, not one passed on which there was not some fighting, more or less, with the Mexicans. On the day of the capture of Guautimucin and fall of the city, after having collected what spoil we could find, we returned to our camp, giving thanks to our Lord for so signal a reward, and so desirable a victory, as he had granted us. I continued three or four days in camp, for the purpose of adjusting matters that required my attention, and afterwards we came to the city of Cuyoacan, where I have remained till the present time, employed in regulating the government and reducing the people in all these countries to a condition of settled peace.

Having collected the gold and other articles of value, the former was melted down by the advice of your Majesty's officials, and amounted to about 130,000 castellanos, of which one fifth part was given to the treasurer of your Majesty; but the fifth of other rights pertaining to your Majesty, as slaves, &c., will appear more at length in the general account of what is due to your Majesty, which will be forwarded, signed with our names. The remainder of the gold was divided amongst myself and the Spaniards, according to the rank, services, and standing of each. Besides this gold, there were certain utensils and jewels of the same metal, and of the best of these one fifth part was given to your Majesty's treasurer. Among the spoils obtained in the city were many shields of gold, plumes, panaches, and other articles, of

so wonderful a character that language will not convey an idea of them, nor could a correct conception be formed of their rare excellence without seeing them. These, it appeared to me, ought not to be divided into fifths or distributed, but the whole presented to your Majesty; for this purpose I called together all the Spaniards and asked them to consent that the parts which might fall to them and to me should be offered to your Majesty; and they were pleased and most willing to make such a disposition of the articles. So we sent the offering to your Majesty by the agents whom the council of this New Spain had deputed.

As the city of Temixtitan was so distinguished and well known throughout this part of the world, it appears that it had come to the knowledge of the cacique of a very extensive province, seventy leagues from Temixtitan, called Mechuacan,* that we had destroyed and razed it to the ground; and considering the greatness and strength of that city, it occurred to the cacique of this province, that since it had been unable to protect itself against us, nothing could withstand us. So from fear, or because it pleased him, he sent messengers to me, who on his behalf, by means of interpreters of their language, informed me that their lord had heard we were the subjects of a great prince, and that if I was willing, both he and his subjects would also like to become so, and to form a firm alliance with us. I answered them, that it was true we were all subjects of a great prince, who was your Majesty, and that we should make war on all who refused his allegiance; and that their lord and themselves had done well in this matter. As I a short time

* Now the department of Michoacan, west of the city of Mexico, bordering on the Pacific Ocean.

before had received some information concerning the South Sea. I inquired of them whether it could be reached by going through their country; they answered, yes; and I then asked them if they would take along with them two Spaniards that I should send for the purpose of obtaining information for your Majesty respecting that sea and their province; they replied that it would give them great pleasure, but that in order to go to the sea it would be necessary to enter the territory of a great lord with whom they were at war; and that for this reason they would not now be able to reach the sea. These messengers of Mechuacan remained with me here three or four days; and I caused the cavalry to manœuvre before them, that they might describe it at home. Having presented them with some trinkets, I despatched them and the two Spaniards to the province of Mechuacan.

I had received not long before, most powerful Sire, as I have already mentioned, some account of another sea to the south, and learned that at two or three points it was twelve, thirteen, and fourteen days' journey distant from this city. The information gave me much pleasure, for it appeared to me that the discovery would prove a great and signal service to your Majesty; especially as all who possess any knowledge or experience in navigation to the Indies have considered it certain that the discovery of the South Sea in these parts would bring to light many islands rich in gold, pearls, precious stones, and spiceries, together with many other unknown and choice productions; and the same has been affirmed also by persons versed in learning, and skilled in the science of cosmography. With such views, and a desire that I might be able to render your Majesty a distinguished and

memorable service in this matter, I despatched four Spaniards, two by one route and two by another, who having obtained the necessary information as to the course they were to take, set out, accompanied by several of our allies as guides and companions. I ordered them not to stop till they had reached the sea; and when they discovered it to take actual and corporal possession in the name of your Majesty. One of these parties travelled about one hundred and thirty leagues, through many fine provinces, without encountering any obstacles, and arrived at the sea, of which they took possession, and in token thereof set up crosses along the coast. After some days they returned with an account of their discovery, and informed me very particularly concerning it; they brought with them several of the natives from that quarter, together with good specimens of gold from the mines found in the provinces through which they passed, which with other specimens I now send to your Majesty. The other party were absent somewhat longer, for they took a different course and travelled one hundred and fifty leagues before they reached the sea, of which they also took possession, and brought me a full account of the coast with some of the natives of the country. I received the strangers in both parties graciously, and having informed them of the great power of your Majesty and made them some presents, I suffered them to depart on their return to their own country, and they went away much gratified.

In my former relation, most Catholic Sire, I informed your Majesty that at the time when the Indians defeated me, and first drove us out of the city of Temixtitan, all the provinces subject to that city rebelled against your Majesty and made war upon us; and your Majesty will

see by this relation how we have reduced to his royal service most of the provinces that proved rebellious. There are certain provinces situated at distances of ten, fifteen, and thirty leagues from the coast of the North Sea,* which rebelled at the same time as Temixtitan, and their people treacherously put to death more than a hundred Spaniards while in a state of fancied security. But it was impossible for me to punish them until the war with the city had been brought to a close. After the return of the exploring parties from the South Sea, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor, with a detachment of thirty-five horse and two hundred Spanish foot, accompanied by our allies, and some of the noble natives of Temixtitan, to those provinces named Tatactetelco, Tuxtepeque, Guatusco, and Aulicaba; and when I had given him instructions as to his mode of procedure in this expedition, he began his preparations for carrying them into effect.

At this time the deputy I had left in the town of Segura de la Frontera, in the province of Tepeaca, came to the city of Cuyoacan, and informed me that the natives of that province and others adjacent to it, vassals of your Majesty, had sustained some injury from the people of another province called Guaxacaque, [Oaxaca,] who had made war upon them because they were in alliance with us; and that besides the necessity of redressing this wrong, it was a matter of great importance to reduce that province of Guaxacaque, from its being on the route to the South Sea, and for other reasons that I shall hereafter state to your Majesty. The deputy added, that he was well informed respecting the condition of that province, and would be able to subdue it with a small force;

* The Gulf of Mexico.

for while I was encamped near Temixtitan, he had gone there at the earnest solicitation of the Tepeacans, who wished him to make war upon it, but as he had not taken with him more than twenty or thirty Spanish soldiers, they caused him to return, though no sooner than he wished. On hearing this account, I gave the deputy a force of twelve horse and eighty Spanish foot; and in company with the alguazil mayor he left Cuyoacan on the 30th of October, 1521. When they reached the province of Tepeaca they there reviewed the troops; after which each party proceeded on its own destination. Twenty-five days after, the alguazil mayor wrote me that he had arrived in the province of Guatusco, and although he had feared a serious conflict with the enemy, who were skilful in war and had many fortresses in their country, it pleased our Lord that they should meet with a peaceful reception; that although he had not reached the other provinces, he felt assured that all of them would yield subjection as vassals of your Majesty. Fifteen days later I received other letters from him informing me of his farther progress, and that the whole country was at peace; and that it appeared to him necessary, in order to keep it in a state of security, to plant colonies in it, as we had some time before talked of doing, and recommending to me to take measures for this purpose. I wrote to him, thanking him much for his labors in that expedition to promote your Majesty's service; and I expressed my approbation of what he had said in favor of colonizing the country, desiring him to establish a Spanish town in the province of Tuxtebeque, and to give it the name of Medellin;* and I sent him a list of persons for alcaldes, regidores and other officials, whom I enjoined

* The name of the native town of both Cortes and Sandoval.

to look carefully after the interests of your Majesty and the kind treatment of the natives.

The deputy of the town of Segura de la Frontera proceeded to the province of Guaxaca, having besides his own force a large body of warriors of the neighboring region, our allies; and although the people of that province made some resistance, fighting bravely on two or three occasions, they finally sued for peace, without having suffered any loss. I received from him a particular account of all that had occurred, and information that the country was rich, and abounded in mines; a very remarkable specimen of gold procured from them, which he sent to me, I transmit to your Majesty. The deputy remained in the province for the purpose of executing the orders I should send him.

Having ordered these two conquests, and witnessed the success that crowned our exertions in that quarter; and seeing that I had already established these Spanish towns, while there yet remained with me at Cuyoacan a goodly number of our countrymen, I consulted with them about a site for another colony in the neighborhood of the lakes, which was necessary for the safety and tranquillity of all this region. As the city of Temixtitan was a place of great celebrity and distinction, and ever memorable, it appeared to me that it would be well to build another town upon its ruins; I therefore distributed the ground amongst the proposed inhabitants, and appointed alcaldes and regidores in the name of your Majesty, according to the custom of your realms; and while the houses were going up, we determined to abide in this city of Cuyoacan, where we at present are. It is now four or five months since the rebuilding of the city was commenced, and it is already very handsome; and

your Majesty may be assured that it will go on increasing to such a degree that, as it was formerly the capital and mistress of all these provinces, it will still be so hereafter. It is built so far, and will be completed, in such a manner as to render the Spaniards strong and secure, greatly superior to the natives, and wholly unassailable by them.

In the mean time, the cacique of the province of Tecoantepeque, situated towards the South Sea, which the two Spaniards explored, sent to me certain chiefs by whom he offered himself as a vassal of your Majesty, and at the same time sent presents of jewels and pieces of gold, and feathered ornaments, all which were delivered to the treasurer of your Majesty. I thanked the messengers for what they had declared on the part of their lord, and gave them a number of things, which they took and returned much pleased to their own country.

There also arrived at this time the two Spaniards who had gone to the province of Mechuacan, through which, as the messengers sent by the cacique had reported, one route lay to the South Sea, except that it also led across the territory of another cacique who was his enemy. With these Spaniards came a brother of the cacique of Mechuacan, and several other nobles, attended by a retinue of more than a thousand servants, whom I received with many marks of regard. They brought me for your Majesty on the part of the cacique of the province called Calcucin, a present of silver shields, that weighed many marks,* and numerous other articles, which were delivered to the treasurer of your Majesty. In order that they might see our mode of manœuvring, and report it

* A mark weighs eight ounces—hence called a *piece of eight*.

to their cacique, I caused all the cavalry to parade on the square, and run and skirmish before them; the infantry also marched out in order, and the musketeers discharged their pieces; at the same time, the artillery fired at a tower, and the natives were astonished to see the effect produced, as well as by the running of the horses. I then took them to survey the desolate ruins of the city of Temixtitan, and they were surprised on beholding the strength with which it had been built, with its fortresses, situated as it was in the midst of the water. After four or five days, when I had given them many things for their cacique, such as were most prized by them, and also for themselves, they departed much pleased with their visit.

I have already given your Majesty an account of the river Panuco, fifty or sixty leagues distant from Vera Cruz along the coast, to which the ships of Francisco de Garay had made several visits, when they met with a rude reception from the natives, on account of the bad management of the captains in trading with them. Subsequently, when I saw that there was a deficiency of harbors along the whole coast of the North Sea, and no one equal to that afforded by the river in question, and recollecting that some of the natives had formerly come to offer themselves as your Majesty's vassals, who now were making war on our allies, I determined to send there a captain with a small force to reduce all that province, and if the country was suitable for a colony, to establish one on the river, in order to secure the tranquillity of all that region.* Although we were few in number, our force being scattered in three or four different directions, and on this account I met with opposition to

* Tampico is now situated at the mouth of the river Panuco.

the removal of any more men ftom this post, yet in order to succor our allies, and because since the city of Temixtitan was taken ships had arrived and brought reinforcements of men and horses, I caused twenty-five horse, one hundred and fifty foot, and a captain to command them, to be in readiness for proceeding to that river.

While engaged in this business, I received accounts from Vera Cruz of the arrival at that fort of a ship in which came Cristoval de Tapia, smelting-inspector in the island of Española, from whom I had a letter the next day, in which he informed me that the object of his coming to this country was to assume the government of it by your Majesty's command, and that he had brought with him his royal commission, which he should no where exhibit until he saw us, but hoped this would be soon; as, however, the animals he had brought were affected bv the voyage, he should not set out at present, and begged we would direct how the interview should take place, whether by his coming here, or by going myself to the sea-coast. As soon as I had received his letter, I answered it, saying that I was much pleased with his arrival; that no one could come provided with an order from his Majesty to assume the government of these parts with whom I should be better pleased, both on account of the acquaintance that existed between us, and the neighborly intercourse we had enjoyed together in the island of Española. Tranquillity not being firmly established in this quarter, and any novelty being likely to estrange the natives, I begged Padre Fr. Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, Commissary de la Cruzada, (who has been present in all my labors, and knew well the situation of affairs to the present moment, and by whose coming your Majesty's service has been promoted, and ourselves

benefitted by his spiritual teachings and counsels,) to undertake the task of meeting the said Tapia, and examining the orders of your Majesty; and since he knew better than any one what the royal interests required, as well as those of the country, that he would give such directions to the said Tapia as he deemed most proper, from which he knew I would not deviate in the least degree. I made this request in the presence of your Majesty's treasurer, who joined his solicitations to mine. He accordingly departed for the town of Vera Cruz, where the said Tapia was; and in order that suitable attentions might be paid to the Inspector, either in the town, or wherever they should meet, I despatched with the padre two or three respectable persons from my companions, and when they had gone I waited the issue. In the mean time, I employed myself in regulating the affairs of my command, and in such a way as best to promote your Majesty's interests, and the peace and security of these parts.

In ten or twelve days after, the magistrate and municipality of Vera Cruz wrote me, that the said Tapia had exhibited the orders of your Majesty, and of your governors acting in the royal name, which they had treated with all suitable reverence; but that as to the execution of the orders, they had answered, that since the most of the government were with me, having been concerned in the siege of the city, they should be informed of them, and in the mean time they would do whatever the service of your Majesty and the good of the country required; this answer, they added, was received by the said Tapia with great displeasure, and he had since attempted some scandalous things. Although this intelligence occasioned me some regret, I answered them, and begged and en-

treated that they would look chiefly to the service of your Majesty, and endeavor to content the said Tapia, giving him no occasion for making a disturbance ; and that I was about going to meet him, and to comply with whatever your Majesty commanded, and the most your service required. As I was now preparing to depart, the proposed expedition to the river Panuco was suspended, since it was necessary to leave a strong force here during my absence; but the members of the Council of New Spain entreated me with many protestations not to go, as all this province of Mexico and Temixtitan, having been but a short time reduced, might revolt in my absence, whence much injury would be done to your Majesty's service, and great disturbance caused in the country. They also urged many other arguments and reasons why it was inexpedient for me to leave this city at present; and added, that they with the authority of the Council would go to Vera Cruz, where the said Tapia resided, examine the orders of your Majesty, and perform all that the royal service demanded. As it seemed so essential to our safety that the said counsellors should go, I wrote by them to Tapia, informing him of what had passed, and that I had authorised Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguazil mayor, Diego de Soto, and Diego de Valdenebro, who were there in the town of Vera Cruz, jointly with the Council of Vera Cruz, and the members of the other town councils, to see and perform whatever the service of your Majesty, and the good of the country required ; for that they were, and still are, the persons whose duty it was to execute such orders.

When they reached the place where the said Tapia was, who had already set out on his journey to this city, accompanied by the Padre Fr. Pedro, they requested him

to return, and they all went together to the city of Cempual, where Cristobal de Tapia presented your Majesty's orders, which all received with the respect due to your Majesty. In regard to their execution, they said that they asked some delay of your Majesty, as demanded by the royal interests, for causes and reasons contained in their petition, and more fully set forth therein; which the deputies from New Spain carried, signed by a public notary. After some other acts and proceedings between the inspector and the deputies, he embarked in his own ship, as he had been requested to do; since from his remaining, and having published that he had come as governor and captain of these parts, there would have been disturbances; the people of Mexico and Temixtitan having designed in connexion with the other natives of the country to revolt, and having plotted a great treason which would have been more difficult to meet than the former. The plan was as follows: some Indians in this part of Mexico concerted with others in the provinces which the alguazil mayor had gone to reduce, that they should come to me in great haste, and report "that twenty ships with many people had arrived on the coast, but had not come into the harbor; and that as they could not be friendly, if I would go and ascertain what they were, they would put themselves in readiness, and engage in the war as my auxiliaries"; and for the purpose of creating belief in their account, they brought me a representation of the ships on paper. As they had sent me this information secretly, I immediately knew their motive, which was bad, and that it was a plan to get me out of this province; for some of their principal persons had known several days before my intention to go, but finding that I remained, they had sought this mode of inducing me to

depart. At first I pretended not to know their design, but afterwards I apprehended some of those who had been concerned in it. In this way the coming of the said Tapia, and his want of knowledge respecting the country and its inhabitants, excited sedition, and his stay would have led to serious evils, if God had not interposed to prevent it. Much greater service would have been rendered to your Majesty, if, while he was in the island of Española, instead of coming hither, he had first advised with your Majesty, after informing you of the situation of affairs in this country, which he had learned from the ships I had sent to that island for succors; and he had also known well the discomfiture of the mischievous designs that prompted the expedition of Panfilo de Narvaez, which had been chiefly set on foot by the governors and royal council of your Majesty. But what is of greater moment, the said Tapia had been often advised by the admiral, judges, and other officials of your Majesty, residing in the island of Española, not to come into these parts until your Majesty had first been informed of all that had taken place here; and on this account they had prohibited his coming under certain penalties; which prohibition, however, by means in his power, looking more at his individual interest than the service of your Majesty, he had succeeded in getting removed. I have prepared this account of every thing in relation to this matter for your Majesty, because, when the said Tapia departed, neither the deputies nor myself drew up any statement, as he would not have been a suitable bearer of our letters; and also that your Majesty may see and believe, that by not receiving the said Tapia, your Majesty was well served, as will be more fully established whenever it shall be necessary.

In a former part of this relation, I informed your Majesty that the captain whom I sent to conquer the province of Guaxaca, had succeeded in reducing it to subjection, and was waiting there for further orders from me; and since there was need of his presence elsewhere, on account of his being alcalde and deputy of the town of Segura la Frontera, I wrote him to deliver the men and horse under his command to Pedro de Alvarado, whom I had sent to conquer the province of Tatutepeque,* which is forty leagues beyond Guaxaca, adjoining the sea, whose inhabitants had waged a mischievous war against those provinces that professed allegiance to your Majesty, and also against the province of Tecoatepeque, because we had been allowed to pass through its territory for the purpose of discovering the South Sea. Pedro de Alvarado left this city on the last of January of the present year, [1522,] and with the men he took from here, and those that joined him in Guaxaca, his whole force amounted to forty horse and two hundred foot, including forty archers and musketeers, and two small field pieces. In twenty days from the time of his departure, I received a letter from him while on his route to the province of Tatutepeque, in which he informed me that he had taken certain spies, natives of that province, who, on being questioned, said that the cacique of Tatutepeque with his people was expecting him in the field. He also stated that he was going with the determination to do the utmost in his power to reduce that province, for which end he had with him besides the Spaniards a large and effective force of native troops. While waiting with much anxiety the success of this expedition, on the fourth of March in the same year,

* Tuxtepeque, in Guatemala.

I received letters from Pedro de Alvarado, in which he informed me that he had entered the province; that three or four towns in it had attempted some resistance, but did not hold out, and he had gone to the town and city of Tatutepeque, where he was well received, so far as appeared; that the cacique had desired him to lodge in some of his large houses with thatched roofs, but the situation being inconvenient for the cavalry, they had sought another in a lower part of the city, which was more level; that he had also made this change for another cause, having received an intimation that they had planned to destroy him and his whole party by setting fire to the houses in which all the Spaniards were lodged, in the middle of the night, and burning them to death. God having revealed this plot to him, he had dissembled his knowledge of it, and took with him to the lower situation the cacique of the province and his son, whom he had detained, and still kept in his power as prisoners; that they had given him 25,000 castellanos, and he believed, as informed by the vassals of the cacique, that he possessed much treasure; that all the province was as tranquil as possible, and the markets and places of business were open as usual; that the country was rich in gold mines, and in his presence they had taken out a specimen, which he sent to me; and that three days before he had been to the sea, and taken possession of it for your Majesty, from which in his presence they had obtained a specimen of pearls, which he also sent me, and which together with the gold I transmit to your Majesty.

As God our Lord had prospered this expedition, and was about to filfil the desire I had of serving your Majesty on this South Sea, a matter of deep importance, I made active arrangements for the construction of two

caravels of moderate capacity, and two brigantines, at one of the three points where I had discovered the sea; the caravels for voyages of discovery, and the brigantines for coasting. For this purpose I despatched thither under the charge of a discreet person full forty Spaniards, amongst whom were master-workmen, ship-carpenters, sawyers, smiths, and seamen; and I had procured from the town [Vera Cruz] a supply of nails, sails, and other necessary articles for the vessels; I also directed the greatest possible haste to be made in finishing and launching them. When this is accomplished, your Majesty may be assured it will be the greatest achievement, and the one that will redound more to the service of your Majesty than any thing since the discovery of the Indies.

While in the city of Tesaico before going to besiege the city of Temixtitan, and in the midst of our preparations for that enterprise, without attending to the movements of individuals, there came to me one of a band of conspirators with the disclosure, that certain friends of Diego Velazquez amongst my followers had plotted to take my life, and that they had chosen from their number a captain, alcalde mayor, alguazil, and other officials. I saw at once the necessity of taking measures to arrest this movement, for besides the mischief that would follow from my death, not a Spaniard would escape when we should be seen at variance with one another; for we should find not only the enemy acting against us, but even those who had been our allies laboring for our destruction. When I perceived the enormity of these treasonable designs, I gave thanks to our Lord, for to that our safety is to be attributed. I immediately caused one who was the principal aggressor to be apprehended, who voluntarily confessed that he had planned in con-

cert with a number of persons, whom he mentioned in his confession, to seize and kill me, and assume the government of the country for Diego Velazquez; that it was actually proposed to appoint a captain and an alcalde mayor, and that he himself was to have been alguazil mayor and to seize me and put me to death; that many persons were implicated in the plot, whose names were contained in a list found in his quarters, though torn in pieces; and that not only at Tesaico, but also during the war in the province of Tepeaca, these treasonable designs had been agitated and planned. When I heard the confession of this man, whose name was Antonio de Villafaña, a native of Zamora, as his guilt was proved by his own confession, an alcalde and myself condemned him to suffer death, which sentence was accordingly carried into effect. Although we found others were implicated in this affair, I dissembled with them, treating them as friends; and as I was personally concerned, although your Majesty's interests were more properly involved, I did not wish to proceed rigorously against them. This lenity, however, did not prove of much advantage; since from that time to this, the partizans of Diego Velazquez have laid many snares for me, and secretly committed many scandalous outrages, so that I was obliged to be more on my guard against them than even our enemies. But God our Lord has ever guided us to such a course, that without resorting to punishment we have been able to maintain peace and tranquillity; and should I hereafter perceive any other demonstrations of a similar kind, I shall visit it with a punishment conformable to justice.

After the fall of the city of Temixtitan, since my residence at Cuyoacan, Don Fernando, cacique of Tesaico,

died ; an event deeply lamented by us all, for he was a good subject of your Majesty, and a great friend to the Christians. His younger brother who was baptized, and had assumed the name of Don Carlos, succeeded him in the caciqueship, in your Majesty's name, with the approbation of the nobles and principal persons of that city and province ; and so far as is known to the present time, he follows in the footsteps of his brother, and takes much pleasure in conforming to our habits and mode of life.

In my former relation I informed your Majesty that near the provinces of Tlascala and Guajocingo, there is a conical mountain of great height, from which smoke issues almost continually, and mounts in a straight column like an arrow.* As the Indians told us it was dangerous to ascend this mountain, and fatal to those who made the attempt, I caused several Spaniards to undertake it, and examine the character of the summit. At the time they went up, so much smoke proceeded from it, accompanied by loud noises, that they were either unable or afraid to reach its mouth. Afterwards I sent up some other Spaniards, who made two attempts, and finally reached the aperture of the mountain whence the smoke issued, which was two bow-shots wide, and about three-fourths of a league in circumference ; and they discovered some sulphur around it, which the smoke deposited. During one of their visits they heard a tremendous noise, followed by smoke, when they made haste to descend, but before they reached the middle of the mountain there fell around them a heavy shower of stones, from which they were

* Popocatepetl.

in no little danger. The Indians considered it a very great undertaking to go where the Spaniards had been.

I have informed your Majesty in my letter, that the natives of these parts possessed more capacity than those of the other islands,* appearing to us to have as much understanding and intelligence as persons not above mediocrity; and for this reason it seemed to me a serious matter to compel them to serve the Spaniards in the same manner as the natives of those islands, although without their services the conquerors and settlers here would not be able to sustain life. In order to impose no constraint on the Indians, and that the Spaniards may have some compensation for being deprived of their services, it seems to me that your Majesty should command the rents that pertain to your Majesty to be applied in part to their expenses and support; and on this head such provision should be made as would best subserve the service, as I shall more fully inform your Majesty. Seeing the many and constant expenses of your Majesty up to this time, and that we ought to increase the rents by every means before we add to them; and seeing also the great length of time that we have been engaged in these wars, and the wants and necessities to which we have all been exposed, and the delay that must arise before the commands of your Majesty are known; and above all, considering the great importunity of your Majesty's officials and all the Spaniards, and the impossibility of excusing myself to them, I was almost compelled to place the caciques and natives of the country in the hands of the Spaniards, on account of the services they have rendered your Majesty here; and in the mean time some other arrangement may be hereafter made, or

* "Las otras islas."

this confirmed, that the said caciques and natives may serve, and yield to every Spaniard to whose hands they are committed what is necessary for his support. This plan was adopted with the advice of persons who had and still possess much intelligence and experience in this country; a better could not be pursued, either for the support of the Spaniards, or the preservation and kind treatment of the Indians, as will more fully appear in the reports of the deputies that go from New Spain to your Majesty. Instead of rents of farms and lands your Majesty will possess the revenues of provinces and cities which are better and more convenient. I beg your Majesty to command such a provision to be made as may most promote your Majesty's service.

Most Catholic Sire, God our Lord preserve and augment the life and very royal person and powerful state of your Imperial Majesty with an increase of as much greater realms and seignories as your royal heart may desire. From the city of Cuyoacan, in this New Spain of the Ocean-sea, the fifteenth of May, 1522.

Most Powerful Sire, the very humble servant and vassal of your Imperial Majesty, who kisses the very royal feet and hands of your Majesty.

HERNANDO CORTES.

LETTER IV.

THE FOURTH RELATION

SENT BY

FERNANDO CORTES,

GOVERNOR AND CAPTAIN-GENERAL FOR HIS MAJESTY IN NEW SPAIN OF THE OCEAN-SEA,

TO THE

MOST NOBLE AND POWERFUL LORD DON CARLOS,
THE AUGUST EMPEROR AND KING OF SPAIN;

Together with other letters and relations from the Captains Pedro de Alvarado and Diego de Godoy to the said Fernando Cortes.

Printed at Toledo, by Gaspar de Avila; finished October 20th, 1525.

NOTE.

In the year 1523, after the receipt of his Third Letter in Spain, Cortes was at length appointed Governor and Captain-General of New Spain. This was the first commission he received from the crown. In the following Letter he describes the measures taken by him to bring the whole country into subjection, including the districts which had been independent of the Mexican empire. Various enterprises both of conquest and discovery were set on foot, of which he gives an account; but what seems most to have attracted his attention was the possibility of discovering the supposed strait communicating with the East Indies, for which Columbus sought with such indefatigable zeal.

LETTERS OR DESPATCHES

OF

FERNANDO CORTES,

TO THE

EMPEROR CHARLES V.

LETTER IV.

Dated at the city of Temixtitan, (Mexico,) Oct. 15th, 1524.

Most Noble, Powerful and Excellent Prince:

Most Catholic and invincible Emperor, King and Lord:

In the relation that I transmitted to your Majesty by the hands of Juan de Rivera, concerning what has taken place in these parts since my second despatch, I stated that for the purpose of establishing peace and submission to your Majesty's royal service amongst the provinces of Cuatusco, Tustepeque, Guatasca, and others bordering upon them, situated on the North Sea,* (which after the breaking out of the rebellion in this city had thrown off their allegiance,) I had commissioned the alguazil mayor to proceed thither with a considerable force, and that he was then already on his march; and that I had given him orders to form a settlement in those provinces to be called the town of Medellin.† I have now to inform your

*The Gulf of Mexico.

† La villa de Medellin; so called from the native place of Cortes.

Highness, that the proposed town was accordingly settled, and all that region with its various provinces reduced to a state of peace. I afterwards despatched an additional number of men to the same quarter, with orders to the alguazil mayor to continue his route along the coast as far as Guazacualco, which is fifty leagues from Medellin, and one hundred and twenty from this city; to which during my former residence in this city, in the lifetime of Muteczuma, its lord, I sent Diego de Ordas, who is now at your Majesty's court; as I constantly labored to obtain all possible information about that region, in order to communicate it to your Majesty. Ordas was received with the utmost good will by the nobles and native inhabitants, who submitted themselves as vassals and subjects of your Highness. He also ascertained the existence of a large river that flowed through the province and discharged into the sea, with a good harbor for ships at its mouth, which he and the rest of his party had sounded; the adjacent country was also found suitable for a colony. On account of the want of harbors on this coast, it was desirable to find a good one, where a settlement might be formed.

I commanded the alguazil mayor, that before he entered the province he should despatch from its borders certain persons, natives of this city, indicated by me, as messengers to inform the inhabitants that he had gone there in obedience to my orders, and to ascertain whether they were favorably disposed towards your Majesty's service and our alliance, as they had shown themselves on a former occasion; assuring them it was in consequence of the wars in which I had been engaged with the lord of this city and his tributaries, that I had neglected sending persons to visit them for so long a time;

but that I had ever esteemed them as friends and vassals of your Highness, in which relation they would find me disposed to do every thing for them in my power; and finally, that in order to favor and protect them under any circumstances of necessity whatever in which they might be placed, I had sent these people to form a colony in their province. The alguazil mayor with the force under his command proceeded and acted according to my orders, but did not meet with that favorable disposition on the part of the inhabitants which they had before shown; on the contrary, they were found in a warlike attitude, ready to dispute the entrance of our people into their territory. He managed, however, to surprise a village by an attack in the night, where he took prisoner a woman of superior rank, whom all in that region obeyed; through whose means peace was made, for she called in the nobles and ordered them to execute whatever commands I should issue in your Majesty's name, as she herself intended to do. Thus they reached the river in question, [the Guasacualco,] and at a place four leagues from where it discharges into the sea, (no suitable site being found within a less distance,) a settlement was commenced and a town founded, to which was given the name of Espiritu Santo; and there the alguazil mayor sojourned for some days, until peace was made with many other neighboring provinces, and their allegiance secured to your Catholic Majesty. Of this number were Tabasco, on the river Victoria, or Grijalva, as sometimes called; Chimaclan, Quechula, Quizaltepeque, and others that I omit to mention from their small extent; and the natives of these provinces placed themselves under the protection of the inhabitants of the new town, whom they have continued to serve until now; except that some of them, I speak of

Cimaclan, Tabasco, and Quizaltepeque, have lately rebelled, and a month ago I sent a captain with a force from this city to reduce them to your Majesty's service, and punish their rebellion. I have as yet received no news of him, but I believe, if it please our Lord, that they will have good success, since they were well provided with artillery, munitions of war, bowmen and cavalry.

In my former despatch, Most Catholic Sire, of which Juan de Rivera was the bearer, I informed your imperial and Catholic Majesty that a great province, called Mechuacan, the lord of which was named Casulci, had offered its homage through messengers, who brought a certain present, which I forwarded from this New Spain to your Highness by the deputies; and as, according to the accounts brought by several Spaniards that I sent thither, the province and seignory of the Señor Casulci* was of great extent, and possessed much wealth, of which they saw the proofs; it being so near this great city, after I had obtained a reinforcement of men and horses, I commissioned a captain with seventy horse and two hundred foot, well provided with arms and artillery, to visit that province, and explore it, and if it was found to be as represented, to establish a colony in the principal city of Huicicila. He accordingly departed, and was well received by the Señor and the inhabitants of

* This name is more properly written Catzolcin. The dominions of this native province comprised the most fertile portions of Mexico, to some part of which, called by the Spaniards the Province of Valladolid, the primitive name of Mechuacan has been of late restored. In 1531, Don Nuño de Guzman, a Spanish governor, having invaded the northern part of Mechuacan, now called Jalisco, took the cacique prisoner, and having seized ten thousand marcs of silver, besides a considerable amount of gold, and six thousand Indians for the use of his army, burned at the stake Catzolcin and many of his nobles. This unnecessary cruelty, says Lorenzana, was signally punished: Guzman was deposed from office, arrested, and sent to Spain, where he died suddenly, under the displeasure of the king.

the province, who lodged them in that city, provided them with every thing necessary for their subsistence, and gave them about three thousand marcs of silver alloyed with copper, being half silver; also about five thousand pesos of gold alloyed with silver in no definite proportion; together with cotton cloth, and other things that they had; all which, after deducting a fifth part for your Majesty, was distributed amongst the Spaniards of the party. Nevertheless, our people were not sufficiently pleased with the country to be willing to settle in it, and some of them making a disturbance were punished for their disorderly conduct. I therefore caused those to return who desired, and the rest I ordered to go with a captain to the South Sea, where I had and still have a town, called Zacatula,* one hundred leagues from Huicicila; I have also at the same place four ships on the stocks, for the purpose of making discoveries on the sea to the utmost extent of my power, and to promote the service of God our Lord.

While this captain and his detachment were on their way to the city of Zacatula, they received accounts of a province called Coliman, situated fifty leagues to the west of their route; and the whole party, accompanied by many of our allies of Mechuacan, proceeded towards it without my permission; but having advanced some days on the march, they had several engagements with the inhabitants, and although numbering forty horse, more than a hundred foot, bowmen and others armed with sword and buckler, they were routed and driven out of the country; three Spaniards and many of the allies were killed; and the rest took refuge in the city of

* This place still retains its original name; it is a small seaport on the Pacific Ocean, north of Acapulco.

Zacatula. As soon as I heard of this disaster, I ordered the captain to be brought back under arrest, and punished for his disobedience.

Having already informed your Imperial Majesty that I had sent Pedro de Alvarado to the province of Tututepeque,* on the South Sea, I have only to add that he arrived there, and made prisoners of the cacique and his son, who presented him with specimens of gold from the mines and pearls; this is all the information I have received to the present time. Your Highness will recollect that in answer to the accounts this officer forwarded to me on a former occasion, I ordered him to seek immediately in that province a convenient location for a colony, and to establish one there; and I also ordered that the inhabitants of the town of Segura de la Frontera should remove to this place, since there was no necessity of another town so near. This change accordingly took place, and the town was called Segura la Frontera, instead of that which had existed under the same name. The natives of this province and of Guaxaca, Coaclan, Coasclahuaca, Tachquiaco, and others in the vicinity, were distributed amongst the citizens of that town, where they served, willingly rendering themselves useful; and Pedro de Alvarado remained there as magistrate and captain in my place. It happened while I was engaged in the conquest of Panuco, as I shall hereafter relate to your Majesty, that the alcaldes and regidores of this town asked Pedro de Alvarado to go as their deputy to make certain negotiations with me, to which he consented; and in his absence the alcaldes and regidores formed a sort of league and company, convoking the

* Situated to the south of Mechuacan, in Oaxaca. There was a place of the same name in Puebla.

commonalty and appointing new alcaldes, and against the wishes of the captain whom Pedro de Alvarado had left in his place, they abandoned the town, and went into the province of Guaxaca, thus occasioning much uneasiness and disturbance in that quarter. As soon as I was informed of this movement by the captain left there, I despatched Diego de Ocampo, the alcalde mayor, to obtain a knowledge of what had taken place, and punish the guilty. When they heard of this, the persons in question withdrew, and were absent several days, until I apprehended them; so that the alcalde mayor was unable to arrest more than one of the rebels, whom he sentenced to death, but the man appealed to me. When the others were taken, I delivered them to the alcalde mayor, who proceeded against them and sentenced them as he had done the other to death; they also appealed to me. When they had been tried a second time before me, and with the same result, I determined, although the offence was a serious one, yet on account of the time that had elapsed since they were arrested, to commute the punishment of death to which they had been sentenced to a civil death, that is, to banish them from these parts and forbid their return, without the license of your Majesty, under the penalty of incurring their original sentence. In the mean time, the lord of the province of Tututepeque died; and that province and the others adjacent rebelled; whereupon I sent Pedro de Alvarado with a force, accompanied by a son of the deceased lord, whom I had in my power; and although some rencounters had taken place, in which several Spaniards lost their lives, the provinces returned to your Majesty's service, and now remain tranquil, obedient to the Spaniards, although for want of people, the town is not resettled

there being no necessity for it. Thus chastised for their past delinquency, the inhabitants have been so completely subdued, that they even come to this city in obedience to orders they receive.

As soon as this city of Temixtitan was recovered with the country subject to it, two provinces were reduced to the imperial crown of your Cæsarean Majesty, situated forty leagues to the north, on the borders of the province of Panuco, called Tututepeque and Mezclitan.* They comprised a country of considerable strength, not unused to the exercise of arms against the enemy, whom they have around them on all sides. Having witnessed our dealings with the Panucans, and that no obstacle was sufficient to arrest the progress of your Majesty, they sent messengers to me, and offered themselves as subjects and vassals of your Majesty; as such I received them in the royal name of your Majesty, and they maintained their allegiance until after the coming of Christobal de Tapia. At that time, not only tumult and confusion were caused in other provinces, but this people also refused to render the obedience they had promised, and had done much injury to their neighbors who were vassals of your Catholic Majesty, burning many towns and destroying many lives. Although at this conjuncture I had no surplus of people to scatter among so many places, yet seeing that great evil would result from not checking this disaffection, and fearing that the neighboring people would unite with them, to avoid injurious consequences I despatched a captain with thirty horse, a hundred foot, bowmen, musketeers, and buckler-men, together with a large force of our allies; several engage-

* The former in Puebla, and the latter to the north of the city of Mexico.

ments ensued, in which considerable numbers of our allies and two Spaniards were killed; but it pleased our Lord that the people voluntarily sought for peace and delivered up to me their leaders, whom I pardoned on account of their coming in of their own accord without waiting to be taken.

After I was in the province of Panuco, the natives of those parts spread a report that I was gone to Castile, which caused some disturbance, and one of those two provinces, called Tututepeque, rebelled; the cacique, descending from his lands with a large force, burned more than twenty towns of our allies, and killed and made prisoners of great numbers of them. Being on my return from the province of Panuco, I turned aside to conquer them; and although at first they killed some people of our allies that were in our rear, and ten or twelve horses foundered on the sierras in consequence of the ruggedness of the route, all the province was reduced, and the cacique and his brother, a young man, with his captain-general, who commanded the whole frontier of the country, were taken prisoners. The cacique and his captain-general were immediately hanged, and all the prisoners, being about two hundred persons, were made slaves, who were marked and sold by auction, and the proceeds, including the fifth that belonged to your Majesty, distributed amongst those engaged in the war, but proved insufficient to pay for one-third of the horses that were lost; for on account of the poverty of the country there was no other spoil. The rest of the people who remained in the province made peace with us and still maintain it, having for their lord the youthful brother of the cacique who suffered death. Although at present the country is of no service or advantage to us,

by reason of the poverty of the land, as I have remarked, yet it is better it should be in a state of quiet than cause our friends any uneasiness; and for still greater security I have removed to it some of the natives of this region.

At this time, invincible Cæsar, there arrived at the port and town of Espiritu Santo, of which I have made mention on a preceding page, a very small brigantine from Cuba, and in it one Juan Bono de Quejo, who had accompanied the expedition of Panfilo de Narvaez to this country as master of one of the ships; and it appeared by the despatches that he brought, that he came by command of Don Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, in the belief that Christobal de Tapia, whom he had contrived to have made governor of it, was here. Lest he should meet with obstacles, as he feared, for the manifest reason that led him to fear it, the Bishop sent him to the island of Cuba to communicate with Diego Velasquez, as he had done, who had given him the brigantine in which he arrived. This Juan Bono brought about one hundred letters of the same tenor, signed by the bishop, some of which I believe were with blank directions, in order that Juan Bono might give them to such persons as were here, and he thought best; the purport of these letters was, that they would much advance the service of your imperial Majesty by giving the said Tapia a favorable reception, for which they would obtain a great reward; that they should be informed that by serving with me they were acting against the wishes of your Excellency; and many other things sufficiently calculated to excite sedition and disaffection. To me he wrote another letter of the same general tenor, to which he added that if I would obey the said Tapia I should receive marked rewards from your Majesty;

but if not, that I might deem it certain you would consider me a mortal enemy. The arrival of this Juan Bono and the letters he brought produced such an effect on the people with me, that I assure your Majesty if I had not pacified them by explaining the cause of the bishop's writing in this way, and leading them to disregard his threats, at the same time declaring that the greatest service your Majesty could receive, and for which you would bestow the greatest recompense, would be to prevent the bishop or any of his people from interfering with these regions, as it was his intention to conceal the truth from your Majesty, and to seek rewards here without your Majesty knowing what you were bestowing—I should have had difficulty enough to keep them quiet, especially when I was informed, although I feigned ignorance at the time, that they proposed, (as fears were felt in regard to their pay,) to have a council here as well as in Castile, that your Majesty might be informed of the truth; since the bishop had so much to do in this business, that their representations did not reach the knowledge of your Highness; as he held the offices in the board of trade at Seville in his own control, where their messengers had been ill treated, their reports, letters and money taken from them, and all succors of men, arms and provisions withheld. But by acquainting them with what I have stated above, and assuring them that your Majesty knew nothing of any o those things, and that they might be satisfied your Highness would reward them for their services in such a manner as good and loyal subjects who served their king and lord as they had done, deserved; I succeeded in calming their fears, and they became and still are content with the arrangements your Highness com-

manded me to make, according to the royal provisions. They have since served with the greatest alacrity and good will, as the fruits of their labors bear witness, for which they merit some reward from your Majesty—as they have always rendered good service, and still do so, and are disposed to continue in the same course. I therefore most humbly entreat your Majesty on their behalf; for I shall receive it as no less a mark of favor to myself than to them, if a reward is given them; since without them I could not have rendered your Majesty the service I have done. Especially, I supplicate your Highness in the most humble manner to write to them, referring to the toils they have encountered in your service, and offering them rewards for what they have done; since besides discharging a debt which your Majesty owes in this matter, it would animate them to perform future service with much greater zeal.

CHAPTER II.

By an order which your imperial Majesty, on the petition of Juan de Rivera, has granted touching the affairs of the Adelantado Francisco de Garay, it appears your Highness was informed that I had resolved to go or send to the river Panuco for the purpose of establishing peace. One reason was, that there was reported to be a good harbor at the mouth of that river; and moreover, a number of Spaniards had been killed there, as well the party under a captain sent by Francisco de Garay, as another belonging to a ship that afterwards visited that coast, of whom not one was left alive. Some of the natives of those parts had come to me to excuse themselves for these murders, saying that they had committed them with the knowledge that the men did not belong to my company, and alleging that they had been ill-treated by them; but they assured me that if I wished to send any of my people there, they would receive them with much attention, and serve them by all means in their power; that they would be pleased to have me send them, for they feared that some of their enemies with whom they had been engaged would return to wreak their vengeance on them, since they were their neighbors and had done them much mischief; but that the Spaniards whom I should order there would be able to protect them. When these persons came to me, it was out of my power to comply with their request, but I promised them I would do so in as short a time as possible; whereupon they went away contented, having offered

for vassals of your Majesty ten or twelve towns of those nearest to the limits of the dominions of this city. A few days after they returned to me, earnestly entreating that since I had sent Spaniards to colonize other parts of the country, I would establish a colony amongst them also; otherwise, on account of their having come to me, they would receive much injury from their enemies belonging to the same river, and those on the sea-coast, although they were of the same race as themselves. In order to comply with the wishes of these persons, and to found a colony, as I was now better supplied with men, I directed a captain to go to that river, taking a certain number with him; and while he was on the eve of his departure, I learned by a ship that came from the island of Cuba, that the Admiral Don Diego Columbus* and the Adelantados Diego Velasquez and Francisco de Garay had joined their forces, and confederated together to effect an entrance into the country at that place, in order to do me as an enemy all the injury in their power. To prevent their hostile disposition from taking effect, and guard against any disturbance being produced by their arrival, as had happened in the case of Narvaez, I left the city, having taken all the precautions in my power, to go in person, in order that if they or any one of them should arrive, they might meet me before any one else, as I could better avert the danger.

Thus I departed with one hundred and twenty horse, three hundred foot, and some artillery, besides about forty thousand warriors natives of this city and its vicinity; and when I had arrived within the limits of the country, full twenty-five leagues before reaching the port, in a large settlement called Ayntuscotaclan, I encountered on

* Son of Christopher Columbus.

the road a large force of the enemy, and engaged with them; but on account of the great number of our allies, who came to our assistance, and the level ground well suited to the movements of the cavalry, the battle did not last long, although several of my horses and men were wounded, and some of our allies killed; the enemy suffered most, great numbers of them being killed, and their whole force routed. I remained there in the town two or three days, both to cure the wounded, and receive the people who came to acknowledge themselves vassals of your Highness. They followed me to the port, and rendered us every service in their power. In no part of the route did I again encounter an enemy; but, on the other hand, as I proceeded along the road, the inhabitants came out to beg my pardon for their past offences, and to offer professions of allegiance to your Highness. Having arrived at the harbor and river, I took up my quarters in a town five leagues from the sea, called Chila, which had been depopulated and burnt, in consequence of the defeat of the captain and people of Francisco de Garay at that place. From thence I sent messengers to the other side of the river, and to the lakes, on all of which are situated large towns, proclaiming to the inhabitants that they need entertain no fears that I would make them suffer for the past, for I well knew it was in consequence of the ill treatment they had received from our people that they had risen against them, for which they deserved no blame. Nevertheless none of them would come in, but they abused the messengers, and even killed some of them; and as on the other side of the river there was fresh water from which we obtained our supplies, they posted themselves there, and fell upon those who went for the water. Thus I remained more than fifteen days, think-

ing I could bring them over by kind acts, and with the hope that seeing the good treatment of those who came in, they might be induced to follow their example; but they had so much confidence in the security afforded by their lakes, on which they abode, that none of them would come. When I discovered that nothing was gained in this way, I began to seek a remedy; besides the canoes that we had there from the beginning, we took others, and by means of them landed horses and men on the other side of the river during the night, without being observed by the enemy. I passed over myself, leaving the camp carefully guarded; and as soon as we were discovered, a large body of the enemy came up and attacked us with greater vigor and boldness than I have ever witnessed since I have been in this country; they killed two horses, and wounded more than ten others so badly that they were unable to go. By the aid of our Lord, however, we succeeded in routing them, and pursued them about a league, when many of their number perished. With about thirty horse that remained to me, and a hundred foot, I still continued advancing, and at night lodged in a town three leagues from my camp, which was deserted by its inhabitants; in the temple of this place several articles were found that belonged to the party of Francisco de Garay, who were killed by the natives.

The next day I advanced along the coast of a lake to find a passage to the other side, where we saw inhabitants and towns; but we spent the whole day without discovering any end to the lake, or place where we could cross it. About the hour of vespers we came in sight of a handsome town, and proceeded towards it; it was situated on the shore of the lake, and when we arrived at the place, it was already evening, and no inhabitants were seen. But to insure our safety, I ordered ten horse-

men to enter the town by the road to the right, while I with ten others took the other course leading down towards the lake; the remaining ten horse were to bring up the rearguard, and had not yet arrived. On entering the place there appeared to be a great number of people concealed in ambush within the houses, in order to take us by surprise; who attacked us with such spirit, that they killed a horse and wounded almost all the others besides many Spaniards. They fought with great method, and the battle lasted a long time; although repulsed three or four times, they formed again each time, and kneeling upon the ground in a circle, without speaking or uttering any sound, waited for us to come up, when they poured into us a shower of arrows, which flew so thick that if we had not been protected by armor not one of us would have escaped unhurt. At length it pleased our Lord that some of the enemy, who were nearest to a stream that flowed into the lake along which I had marched all day, threw themselves into the water, when others behind them also began to run towards the stream, and thus a general rout took place, though they only fled to the other side of the river. Thus we remained until night closed in, they on one side and we on the other side of the river, which was too deep for us to cross in pursuit of them, though we were not sorry to have them pass it. So we returned to the town, which was about a sling's throw from the river; where we stayed that night as well guarded as possible, and consumed the horse the enemy had killed, having no other provision. The next day, as the inhabitants did not appear, we took a road that led to three or four towns, in which no people were found, nor any thing else except some store-rooms for wine, con-

taining a goodly number of jars of that beverage.* During that day we fell in with none of the inhabitants, and slept in the country, where we found some fields of maize, with which our men and horses were somewhat refreshed; and in this manner I proceeded for two or three days, seeing no one although we passed several towns, until overcome by the want of food, (having had during all this time but fifty pounds of bread amongst us all,) we returned to the camp, where I found our people in good condition, not having encountered the enemy during our absence. It occurred immediately to me that all the inhabitants of this quarter had gone to that part of the lake which I had been unable to cross; I therefore at night embarked some men and horses in canoes to go in that direction, while the bowmen and musketeers went up the lake, and the rest of the people proceeded by land. In this manner the combined force attacked a large town, in which many of the enemy were surprised and slain; in consequence of which, finding there was no safety for them although surrounded by water, being still liable to unexpected assaults, they began to sue for peace; and thus in about twenty days the whole country was subdued, and the inhabitants submitted themselves as vassals of your Majesty.

As soon as peace had been thus established, I commissioned several persons to visit every part of this region, and to bring me a report of the towns and inhabitants; when this was done, I sought for the best location that I could find, where I planted a town, with the name of Santistevan del Puerto. In addition to those who desired to remain there to inhabit the new town, I transferred

* Probably the same kind of liquor still made in that quarter from the sugar-cane.

to the place in your Majesty's name the inhabitants of several villages; and having appointed alcaldes and regidores, I left there my lieutenant as captain together with thirty horse and one hundred foot, and also a shallop and fishing boat, that had been brought to me from Vera Cruz, to enable them to provide themselves with supplies. A servant of mine had sent me from the same place a ship loaded with meat, bread, wine, oil, vinegar, and other things, which was wholly lost, and three of the crew yet remained on a small island in the sea five leagues from land; for when I afterwards sent a brigantine, they were found alive, having sustained themselves by feeding upon sea-wolves, and a fruit which they called figs.*

I assure your Majesty that this expedition cost me alone more than 30,000 pesos of gold, as can be made to appear to your Majesty by the rendition of the accounts; and it cost my companions as much more for horses, provisions, arms, and horse-shoes, the latter being worth at that time their weight in gold, and twice their weight in silver. But when we considered that so great an extent of country was reduced to your Majesty's service, it appeared to us a happy result, even should a greater expense have been incurred; because, besides placing these Indians under the imperial sway of your Majesty, a ship had afterwards arrived there with many people on board and a great supply of provisions, and discharged her cargo, which they could not have done under other circumstances; for if peace had not been established, not a soul could have escaped. Such had been the fate of another ship, whose company were all

* Probably the nopal or Indian fig, the fruit of a species of cactus. The sea-wolves (*'labos marinos'*) were doubtless seals, sometimes called sea-dogs.

massacred; and we had found the faces of the Spaniards flayed in their temples, that is to say, their skins preserved in such a manner that many of them could be recognized. Even when the Adelantado Francisco de Garay arrived in this country, as I shall hereafter relate to your Majesty, neither himself nor any who came with him would have escaped alive; for being compelled by stress of weather to land thirty leagues below the river Panuco, where they lost some of their ships, and all were driven ashore in distress, they would have perished if the people on the coast had not been at peace with us, who took pains to convey them to a Spanish town. Thus it is of no slight advantage to have this land in the enjoyment of peace.

In a preceding part of this despatch, most excellent Prince, I stated that when on my return from the reduction of the province of Panuco, I had conquered the province of Tututepeque, which had rebelled, at the same time relating all that took place on that occasion; when I received information respecting a province near the South Sea, called Impilcingo, of the same character as that of Tututepeque, rendered strong by sierras and the inequality of the ground, and inhabited by a people not less warlike, who had done much injury to the vassals of your imperial Majesty, their neighbors; the latter had come to me with their complaints to solicit aid. Although my troops were somewhat wearied, and the distance from one sea to the other by that route was two hundred leagues, I immediately detached twenty-five horse and seventy or eighty foot, under the command of a captain, and ordered them to proceed to that province. In the instructions that he carried, I directed him to labor to draw them by gentle means to the service of your High-

ness; but if unsuccessful, to make war upon them. He proceeded thither, and had several encounters with the enemy; but on account of the rough nature of the country he was unable to subdue the whole. I had also ordered him in my instructions to go to the city of Zacatula, and with what force he had, and such additional strength as he could raise, to march to the province of Coliman, where, as I have already related, the people had defeated a captain and his party, who had gone from the province of Mechuacan to that city; and that he should endeavor to draw them by friendly means, and if these were insufficient, to conquer them. He accordingly went thither, and the force he carried with what he took on the way amounted to fifty horse, and one hundred and fifty foot. He visited the province containing the city of Zacatula, on the coast of the South Sea, sixty leagues below; on his route to the province he established peace amongst some hostile towns. When he reached the quarter where the other captain had been defeated, he found many warriors collected, expecting his arrival, and thinking to have the same success with him as the former; and thus they met. But it pleased our Lord that our people should gain the victory without the loss of a single man, although many were wounded, both men and horses; and the enemy paid dearly for the mischief they had committed. This chastisement had a good effect, as without further hostilities peace was restored to the whole country; and not only this province, but many others adjoining it, offered themselves as vassals of your imperial Majesty, namely, Aliman, Colimonte, and Ceguatan. He wrote me from thence an account of all that had occurred; and I sent him directions to seek a good site on which he should

establish a town, and give it the name of Coliman, from the province; and I forwarded him a list of alcaldes and regidóres for it. I also directed him to visit the towns and people of those provinces, and bring me a particular description of the country so far as he could obtain a knowledge of it; which he accordingly brought on his return, together with specimens of pearls that he found. In the name of your Majesty I transferred the population of the villages in these provinces to the new town, where I left a force of twenty-five horse and one hundred and twenty foot. The relation he brought of the country contained information of an excellent harbor which was found on that coast, which afforded me much pleasure, as there are few harbors there; and he also brought me an account of the lords of the province of Ciguatan, in which there is affirmed to be an island inhabited by women without any men, although at certain times they are visited by men from the main land; and if the women bear female children they are protected, but if males they are driven from their society. This island is ten days' journey from that province, and many have gone there and seen it.* They also tell me it is very rich in pearls and gold; respecting which I shall labor to obtain the truth, and to give your Majesty a full account of it.

On my way from the province of Panuco, there met me at a city called Tuzapan two Spaniards, whom together with several natives of the city of Temextitan and others of the province of Soconusco, (which is on the upper part of the coast of the South Sea, towards where

* California is supposed to be the island referred to, afterwards discovered to be a peninsula.

Pedrarias Davila, a governor of your Highness, resides,)* I had sent to certain cities of which I had long heard, called Utlatlan and Guatemala, distant two hundred leagues from this great city of Temextitan, and seventy leagues beyond the province of Soconusco. With these Spaniards came about a hundred natives of those cities, by the command of their caciques, offering themselves as vassals and subjects of your Imperial Majesty, whom I received in your royal name; and I assured them, that as long as they proved true to their professions, they would be well treated and favored by me, and those associated with me, in the royal name of your Highness. I gave them, as presents for themselves and their lords such things as I had which are held in esteem amongst them, and I determined to send with them two other Spaniards, in order to make the necessary provision for their journey. Since then I have been informed by some Spaniards whom I have in the province of Soconusco, that those cities with their provinces, and another called Chicapan, in their neighborhood, no longer entertain the loyal disposition they at first manifested, but have even annoyed some towns of Soconusco, because they are friendly to us. On the other hand, however, the Christians write that they have sent messengers to them, and that they disclaim those acts, which they say were committed by others; and in order to ascertain the truth of the matter, I have despatched Pedro de Alvarado with eighty and more horse and two hundred foot, amongst whom are many bowmen, musketeers, and four pieces of artillery, with an abundance of munitions and powder.

* Pedrarias Davila was then governor of the isthmus of Darien, and is noted as the rival of Balboa, the discoverer of the South Sea, who was executed by his orders in 1517.

At the same time I have fitted out a naval armament, under the command of one Cristobal Dolid, who came over with me, to coast along the North Sea, and establish a colony at the point or cape of Hibueras [Honduras,] sixty leagues from the Bay of Ascension, which is to the windward of what they call Yucatan, and on the coast above Terra-Firma towards Darien. The object of this expedition was to obtain information about the country, which is represented to be very rich, and also in reference to the opinion entertained by many pilots, that through this bay a passage may be found to the other sea; the thing that of all others in the world I most desire to meet with, on account of the great service that would result from it to your Imperial Majesty.

CHAPTER III.

While these two captains were on the point of setting forth on their respective routes, a messenger arrived from Santistevan del Puerto, the town I had settled on the river Panuco, who brought me advices from the alcaldes of that place, that the Adelantado Francisco de Garay had arrived at that river with a force consisting of one hundred and twenty horse, four hundred foot, and much artillery, and that he bore the title of governor of the country, as he had informed the natives by means of an interpreter he brought with him; to whom he had announced his intention to avenge the wrongs they had suffered from me in the past war, declaring to them that they should go with him to drive out the Spaniards I had posted there, and any others I should send, in all which matters he said he would aid them, and many other scandalous things, which had produced some disturbance amongst the natives. They added that in confirmation of my suspicions of a confederacy between him, the admiral, and Diego de Velasquez,* a ship had arrived in the river a few days after from the island of Cuba, in which came certain friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, and a servant of the Bishop of Burgos, (the latter being said to have been appointed factor of Yucatan,) nearly the whole party consisting of servants and relatives of Diego Velasquez, and servants of the admiral. As soon as this intelligence reached me,

* See above, page 372.

although I was suffering from an injury to my arm occasioned by a fall from a horse, and kept my bed, I determined to go and meet him in order to prevent any disturbance, and immediately sent forward Pedro de Alvarado with all the force prepared for his intended expedition, proposing to set out myself in two days. When my bed and every thing were already on the road, and had reached a place ten leagues from this city, where I was to go the next day to sleep, there arrived a messenger from the town of Vera Cruz about midnight, who brought me letters received by a ship arrived from Spain, containing an order signed with the royal name of your Majesty, commanding the said Francisco de Garay to desist from any interference on that river where I had established a colony, as your Majesty's service was promoted by my holding it in your royal name; for which I kiss the feet of your imperial Majesty a hundred thousand times. On the reception of this order my journey was at an end, which was not a little advantageous to my health, as I had not slept for sixty days, and suffered much pain; had I gone at that time, my life would have been in danger, but I did not regard this, esteeming it better to die on that journey than by saving my life to be the cause of great scandal and sedition, and of the loss of many lives, which would be much noised about. I immediately despatched Diego Docampo, alcalde mayor, with the order, to follow after Pedro de Alvarado, for whom I gave him a letter, directing him by no means to approach the place where the Adelantado's people were, lest it should give rise to some disturbance. I also directed the alcalde mayor to notify the Adelantado of the order, and immediately inform me of his answer.

The alcalde mayor departed with the greatest possible haste, and reached the province of Guastecas, through which Pedro de Alvarado had passed, who had already gone into the interior of the country. As soon as Pedro de Alvarado heard of the arrival of the alcalde mayor, and that I had remained at home, he informed him that a captain of Francisco de Garay, named Gonzalo Dovalle was ravaging the towns of the province with twenty-two horse, and creating some disturbance amongst the people; that he had placed scouts along the road where Alvarado would have occasion to pass, which led the latter to believe that Dovalle meant to attack him; and in consequence thereof Alvarado had placed his troops in the best order, until he arrived at a place called Laxas, where he found Dovalle with his men, with whom he at once obtained an interview, when he told him that he was acquainted with his movements, which had excited his surprise; since the intention of the governor and his captains neither was, nor had been, to attack them, or do them any injury, but rather to favor them, and provide whatever their necessities might require; that since this was so, in order that they might feel secure, and no offence be offered on one side or the other, he begged it as a favor that the arms and horses of his men should be deposited with him until matters were finally settled. Whereupon Gonzalo Dovalle disclaimed what had been alleged concerning his movements, but professed a willingness to do as was proposed; so the two captains and most of their men came together without any feelings of hostility, or distrust, and shared with one another their food and means of enjoyment. As soon as the alcalde mayor knew this, he sent a secretary of mine that he had taken with him, named Francisco de Orduña, to the place where the cap-

tains, Pedro de Alvarado and Gonzalo Dovalle, were encamped, with an order to take up the deposit, and restore the arms and horses to each one, informing them that it was my intention to assist and befriend them in every way their necessities might require, without giving any uneasiness, or disturbing the country by our dissensions. At the same time the alcalde mayor sent another order to Alvarado, bidding him grant them every indulgence, and not to interfere in any way with their affairs or cause them any trouble; with which he accordingly complied.

At this time, most powerful Sire, the ships of the Adelantado lay at the mouth of the river Panuco, near the sea, in an offensive attitude towards the inhabitants of the town of Santistevan, which I had built there; but it was three leagues up the river to the place where the ships that arrived at the port were accustomed to anchor. On this account Pedro de Vallejo, my lieutenant in the town, in order to guard against any danger from the ships, required their captains and masters to ascend to the harbor, and anchor there in a peaceable manner without disturbing the country; at the same time directing that if they had any orders from your Majesty to enter or settle the country, or of any other purport, they should exhibit them, and promising to obey them when exhibited in relation to whatever your Majesty should command. To this requisition those officers gave a formal answer, the conclusion of which was that they refused to do what was required by the lieutenant. The latter therefore issued a second order of a similar character, directed to the same officers, to which a penalty was added; to this they replied as before. Thus they remained with their ships for more than two months at the mouth of the river,

giving rise to difficulties amongst the Spaniards who resided there, as well as the natives. At length one Castromocho, master of one of the ships, and Martin de San Juan Guipuscuano, master of another, sent privately their messengers to the lieutenant, informing him that they desired peace and would obey the commands of the magistrate; they wished therefore the lieutenant to come on board of the two ships, where they would receive him and comply with his orders; adding that they would find means to induce the other ships to adopt the same course. The lieutenant therefore resolved to go with only five men to those ships; and when he reached them, he was received by the masters; from thence he sent to the captain Juan de Grijalva, the commander of the whole armament, who was on board of the flag-ship, requiring him to yield obedience to the orders of which the lieutenant had before given him notice. He not only refused, but directed the other ships to join his own, and when they had all collected around the flag-ship, except the two abovementioned, he ordered the captains to fire their guns upon two ships until they sunk them. As the order was publicly given, in the hearing of all, the lieutenant commanded the guns of the two ships to be got ready in their defence, which was accordingly done. At this moment the officers of the ships around the flag-ship refused to obey the orders of Juan de Grijalva, and in the mean time Grijalva sent a notary named Vicente Lopez to the lieutenant; after he had delivered his message, the lieutenant answered, justifying the course he had taken, and declaring that he had come with pacific intentions, in order to prevent difficulties that would ensue from the ships lying outside of the harbor in which it was customary for vessels to anchor, being like pirates in a sus-

picious place, as if for the purpose of making a descent upon his Majesty's territory, which had an unfavorable appearance; with other remarks of a similar character. Such was the effect of the interview on the notary, that he returned with the answer to Captain Grijalva, and informed him of all the lieutenant had said, at the same time endeavoring to induce the captain to obey his orders, since it was evident that the lieutenant was a magistrate appointed by your Majesty for this province, whereas Grijalva knew, that neither on the part of Francisco de Garay nor his own, had any order been as yet produced which the lieutenant and the other burghers of Santistevan were bound to recognise; and that it was a very ugly business for them to approach the territory of your imperial Majesty with their ships like pirates. Influenced by these arguments, Captain Grijalva and the officers of the other ships submitted to the orders of the lieutenant, and went up the river to the usual anchorage ground. When they had arrived within the harbor, the lieutenant directed Juan de Grijalva to be arrested, on account of his disobedience of orders. But when my alcalde mayor heard of his arrest, he immediately on the day after commanded him to be set at liberty, and together with the rest of the party to be kindly treated, forbidding any thing belonging to them to be touched; which order was accordingly carried into effect.

The alcalde mayor also wrote to Francisco de Garay, who was in another port ten or twelve leagues distant, informing him that I was unable to visit him, but that I had sent him with full power to settle our affairs, by examining the authority under which each acted, and making such a conclusion as would best promote the service of your Majesty. As soon as Francisco de

Garay, saw the letter of the alcalde mayor, he immediately came where he was, and was well received, both he and his men being supplied with whatever their necessities required. Both then conferred together and examined the several orders, especially the one your Majesty had done me the favor to grant, when the Adelantado professed his willingness to acquiesce, and agreed to take his ships and men, and seek some other place for his colony beyond the limits designated in your Majesty's order. He also requested that as my disposition was friendly towards him, the alcalde mayor would assist him in collecting his people, as many of those he brought with him desired to remain behind, and others were out of the way; and likewise that he would enable him to obtain the necessary supplies for his ships and men. The alcalde mayor immediately provided every thing he asked, and made proclamation in the port where were most of those attached to either party, that all persons who had arrived in the armada of the Adelantado Francisco de Garay should follow and rejoin him, under the penalty, if a cavalier, of losing his arms and horse, and being surrendered as a prisoner to the said Adelantado; and if a foot-soldier, of receiving a hundred lashes, and being surrendered in like manner.

The Adelantado also requested the alcalde mayor, in consequence of some of his men having sold their arms and horses in the port of Santistevan and elsewhere, that he would cause them to be returned, since his people would be of no use to him without their arms and horses; and the alcalde mayor had proclamation made in all parts where the arms or horses of the people might be, and caused those who had purchased them to return them all to the said Adelantado. At his desire also

the alcalde mayor stationed alguazils on the roads to arrest fugitives, and deliver them up as prisoners; many of whom were accordingly taken and delivered into custody. He also sent the alguazil mayor with one of my secretaries to the town and port of Santistevan,* for the purpose of using similar diligence in making proclamation, and collecting the people who were absent and delivering them up, as well as to obtain supplies to the greatest possible extent for the ships of the Adelantado. All this was effected with the greatest diligence, and the Adelantado set out for the port to embark; but the alcalde mayor remained behind with his people in order not to increase the number at the port, and the better to furnish the supplies of provisions; and he continued there six or seven days to see that his orders were all obeyed, as there was a deficiency of provisions. He then wrote to the Adelantado to know if he had any commands, as he was about to return to the city of Mexico,† where I resided; the Adelantado immediately sent a messenger to him, by whom he represented that he found himself in no condition to depart; that he had lost six of his ships, and those he retained were unfit for service; and that he was engaged in drawing up a statement of the case in order to apply to me, since he had not the means to enable him to leave the country. He also represented his people as disputing his authority over them, and denying their obligation to follow him, having appealed from the orders of my alcalde mayor, with which they contended they were not obliged to

* This town afterwards lost the name of Santistevan (St. Stephen;) as it stood at the mouth of the river, Capt. Lyon errs in identifying its site with that of the present town of Panuco, which is eighty miles above. Lyon's *Journal*, &c. I. 59.

† "*Ciudad de Mexico*;" this is the only instance in which the name of Mexico is applied to the citythat occurs in these Despatches.

comply for sixteen or seventeen reasons that they assigned. One of these was, that some of those who accompanied him had died of hunger; with others of no great weight, which they addressed to him personally. He likewise stated that all the diligence used in detaining his men proved of no avail; that those who were with him at night disappeared in the morning, and those one day delivered up as prisoners, regained their liberty the next day; and that two hundred men had deserted in one night. Finally, he begged in the most piteous terms that the alcalde mayor would not set out until he had arrived, for he wished to accompany him for the purpose of meeting me at this city; and that if he left him behind, he thought he should hang himself from vexation.

The alcalde mayor on seeing his letter resolved to wait for him; he arrived in two days, as he had written; when a messenger was despatched to me, by whom the alcalde mayor apprised me of the Adelantado's coming to see me in this city, and said that they would travel slowly until they reached the town of Cicoaque, within the limits of these provinces, where he would await my answer. The Adelantado also wrote me, describing the miserable condition of his ships, and the bad conduct of his men, and declared his belief that I had it in my power to remedy his difficulties by providing him with men and other things of which he was in want, but that he knew he could not expect assistance from any other quarter; he had therefore determined to come to me in person. At the same time he offered me his oldest son together with all that he possessed, and hoped that he should be able to make him my son-in-law, by marrying him to my little daughter. In the mean time

it appearing to the alcalde mayor, when on the eve of his departure for this city, that certain suspicious persons, the friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, had arrived in the armada of Francisco de Garay, who had shown themselves opposed to my operations; and believing that it would not be safe to leave them in the province, as they would be likely by their freedom of speech to excite uneasiness and disaffection amongst the people; in conformity to a certain royal order which I had received from your Majesty, requiring all disorderly persons to leave the country, he commanded them to depart out of the land; amongst whom were Gonzalo de Figueroa, Alonso de Mendoza, Antonio de la Cerda, Juan de Avila, Lorenzo de Ulloa, Taborda, Juan de Grijalva, Juan de Medina, and others. After this they set out and reached the town of Cicoaque, where the alcalde mayor received my answer to his letters, in which I expressed my satisfaction at the coming of the Adelantado, assuring him that on his arrival in this city I would treat with him with the greatest good will on all the subjects mentioned in his letter, and that every thing should be done conformably to his wishes. At the same time I took care that every provision should be made for his personal wants on the road, directing the caciques of the towns through which he would pass to furnish every thing in the most ample manner. When the Adelantado arrived in this city I received him with all the kindness, both in word and deed, that I could show to a real brother; for I was truly grieved at the loss of his ships and the desertion of his men, and freely offered to do all in my power for his relief. As the Adelantado had expressed a strong desire for the fulfilment of what he had written to me respecting the marriage abovementioned,

and importuned me with great earnestness on the subject, I determined to comply with his wishes, by having drawn up with the consent of both parties and much formality, under oath, certain articles for the conclusion of the marriage, and the performance of the agreements on both sides; especially providing that your Majesty should be assured of its being done in a loyal manner.* Thus besides the feelings inspired by our old friendship, the connexion entered into by our children gave rise to others, producing a mutual good will and a desire to promote the welfare of one another, and especially of the Adelantado.

I have already, most powerful Sire, related to your Catholic Majesty the great exertions made by my alcalde mayor to collect the dispersed people of the Adelantado; these efforts, however, proved insufficient to remove the disaffection that prevailed amongst them all; for believing that they would be compelled to go with him in obedience to the order and proclamation that had been made, they retired into the interior of the country, and dispersed themselves about in different places, in small parties of three or six persons, with such privacy that it was impossible to discover their retreats or bring them in. This state of things led to difficulties with the Indians of the province; the sight of the Spaniards scattered in various directions, and the disorders committed by them in seizing the native women and their supplies of food by force, with other outrages and irregularities, caused the

* The daughter of Cortes who was married to a son of Garay, was by his first marriage at Cuba. The second wife of Cortes, to whom he is said to have been privately married, was Doña Marina, his Indian interpreter, but some deny that he was married to her; his third wife was Doña Juana de Zuniga, daughter of the Count de Aguilar, and niece of the Duke de Bexar.—L.

whole land to rise, in the belief that the Spaniards were under separate leaders, as the Adelantado had proclaimed on his arrival in the country through an interpreter whom the Indians could understand, as I have already stated. The natives had cunning enough to inform themselves first how and where the Spaniards were to be found, and then fell upon them by night or day in the villages where they were dispersed; and by this means taking them unawares and unprovided with arms, they destroyed great numbers of them. Thus their boldness rose to such a height that they appeared before the town of Santistevan del Puerto, which had been settled in your Majesty's name, and attacked it with so much spirit that the inhabitants were alarmed lest the place should fall into their hands; as it would have done, had not the people been prepared to receive them, rallying together at a point where resistance could be offered in the most effectual manner, from which they made several sallies upon the enemy and put them to route. When affairs had reached this pass, I received news of what had taken place by a messenger, a foot-soldier, who had escaped by flight from these scenes of disorder, and informed me that the whole province of Panuco had revolted, and that many Spaniards had been slain, especially of the men left there by the Adelantado, together with some of the inhabitants of the town I had built there in your Majesty's name; and from the extent of the insurrection I was led to believe that not a single Castilian had been left alive. God our Lord knows what were my feelings on the receipt of this intelligence, especially when I reflected that no part of this country had cost us so much, which we were now on the point of losing. The Adelantado was so much affected by the news, as well on account of his ap-

pearing to have been the cause of the disaster, as from his having a son, and all that he possessed, in that province, that his grief caused him to be seized with an illness, of which he died three days after.

The Spaniard who brought the first news of the revolt of the people of Panuco, gave no other account of what had taken place than that he with three cavaliers and a foot-soldier had been attacked while entering a town called Tacetuco, [Tanjuco,]* by the inhabitants of that place, who killed two of the cavaliers and the foot-soldiers, with the horse of the other cavalier, who had himself escaped together with our informant under cover of the night; and that they had seen consumed by fire the quarters occupied by the lieutenant in that town with fifteen horsemen and forty foot, where they were expected, and from the appearances there exhibited he believed all of them had been slain. In order that your Majesty might be more particularly informed of what subsequently occurred, I waited six or seven days after obtaining the first news to receive further intelligence; in which time there arrived another messenger from the lieutenant, who remained in the town of Tenertequipa, which is subject to this city, and situated on the line dividing the Mexican territory from that province. The latter wrote me that he was in the town of Tacetuco with fifteen horse and forty foot, expecting the arrival of more men who were to join his force, as he was going to the other side of the river to reduce certain towns that proved

* Tanjuco is now a small Indian village on the Panuco, 127 miles from its mouth by the course of the river, and about half that distance by land. Here Captain Lyon (in 1826) heard the Guasteca language spoken. *Journal*, &c. I. 73. This intelligent traveller made a particular examination of the River Panuco, the results of which appear in the Appendix to his Journal.

hostile; and that during the night, just before dawn, his quarters were surrounded by a multitude of people, who set them on fire; that they mounted their horses, but with so much haste, being taken by surprise, supposing the place to be loyal, as it had been until then, that all were killed except himself and two other cavaliers, who escaped by flight. His horse had been slain, but one of the cavaliers had taken him up on his horse behind himself, and they had thus made their escape. Two leagues from that place they had fallen in with an alcalde of the town and several people, from whom they received shelter, but did not stop long, for they fled in company with him out of the province. He had gained no intelligence of the people left in our colony, nor of those of Francisco de Garay, who were scattered in different directions, none of whom he believed remained alive; for, as I have informed your Majesty, after the Adelantado came there with his company, and told the inhabitants of that province that I had no business with them, as he was the governor whom they ought to obey, and encouraged them to unite with him in driving out of the country the Spaniards who were there under my authority, they had annoyed the colony and the people I had sent to it, and were never afterwards willing to serve a Spaniard. They had murdered some whom they met alone on the public roads, and I believe had all acted in concert in what they had done; for they had attacked the lieutenant and the people who were with him, and probably the inhabitants of the town, and all the rest who were dispersed about the villages, unsuspicious of any insurrection, as the natives had until then served them without the slightest symptoms of ill blood.

Having satisfied myself by this fresh intelligence of the existence of a rebellion amongst the natives of that province, and of the murder of several Spaniards, I despatched with the greatest possible expedition a force consisting of fifty cavaliers and one hundred foot, including bowmen and musketeers, together with four pieces of artillery, much powder and other munitions, under the command of a Spanish captain,* accompanied by two natives of this city, each at the head of fifteen thousand of their countrymen. I directed the captain to march with the utmost speed to that province, and exert himself to enter it without stopping any where, unless it should be absolutely necessary, until he arrived at the town of Santistevan del Puerto, in order to obtain intelligence of the inhabitants and people who had been left there; for it might be that they were invested by the enemy, and in want of succor. The captain accordingly took up his line of march with all possible expedition, and entered the province; he encountered the enemy in two places, but God our Lord granting him the victory, he pursued his way until he reached the town, where he found twenty-two of the cavalry and one hundred foot besieged by the enemy, with whom they had fought six or seven engagements; by means of their artillery they had so far succeeded in the defence of the place, although unable to hold out much longer, even with the greatest exertions in their power; and if the captain I had sent there had delayed his march three days, not one of them would have survived, for they were already perishing with famine. They had sent to Vera Cruz one of the vessels belonging to Francisco de Garay, to carry me in-

*Gonzalo de Sandoval.

telligence of their situation, (as there was no other way,) and to bring them provisions, which they obtained, but not until after they had been relieved by the force I sent. It was ascertained that the people left by the Adelantado Francisco de Garay, in a town called Tamiquil, amounting to about one hundred Spanish foot and horse, had been all cut off, excepting one Indian of the island of Jamaica, who escaped by taking refuge in the mountains; from him they learned that the place had been taken in the night. It was found that there had perished two hundred and ten of the Adelantado's people, and forty-three of the citizens left by me in Santistevan, who at the time of the massacre were visiting the villages that had been entrusted to their care; I am inclined to believe that there were even more of the Adelantado's people, all of whom were not recollected.

The force in the province, including the division under the captain and the troops with the lieutenant and alcalde, together with those found in the town, comprised only eighty horse, and being distributed into three detachments, carried the war with such vigor against the enemy, that about four hundred of the caciques and principal persons were taken prisoners, without reckoning any of the lower class, all of whom, I mean the principal persons, were burned according to the sentence of the magistrate, after they had confessed themselves to have been the instigators of the whole war, each one admitting that he had been present at the death of Spaniards, and concerned in killing them. This done, the others who had been made prisoners were set at liberty, and restored to their villages; and the captain in the name of your Majesty appointed new caciques in the villages from amongst the persons to whom the succession belonged,

according to their rules of inheritance.* At this time I received letters from the captain and others who were with him, assuring me (blessed be our Lord!) that the whole province had been restored to peace and security, and the natives to their loyalty, and I believe the peace will continue undisturbed, the old cause of offence being forgotten. Your imperial Highness may well believe that these people are of a restless character and easily excited by any novelty or seditious movements they might witness; for they were wont also to rebel against their caciques, and would always join in any attempts that were made to resist their authority.

In a former section, most Catholic Sire, I stated that at the time I heard of the arrival of the Adelantado Francisco de Garay at the river Panuco, I had in readiness a fleet of vessels, filled with men, destined for the cape or point of Hibueras, [Honduras,] and the causes that led to the proposed expedition; which was, however, abandoned on the arrival of the Adelantado, in

* The late R. C. Sands, in his memoir of Cortes, regards it as a matter of doubt how many suffered death on this occasion. About four hundred caciques and principal persons were made prisoners, "all of whom," says Cortes, "I mean the *principal persons*, were burnt according to the sentence of the magistrate," &c. From this statement Sands endeavors to make it appear that none of the caciques suffered, and it being left uncertain what was the relative proportion of "principal persons" amongst the four hundred, it was also uncertain how many were put to death, but certainly less than four hundred. In support of this construction he quotes Herrera, who says that only thirty were burnt, and the rest pardoned. But unluckily for this view of the matter, Cortes expressly adds that new caciques were appointed to succeed to the vacancies created at the time; so that his expression, "principal persons," must have been used in the second instance in contradistinction to the common people, and thus included the caciques. Gomara confirms this account; who also describes the sentence and execution as the result of a civil process, and not as "a religious exercise," as stated by Sands. The relatives of the criminals were made to witness their fate to deter them from similar offences, and then they were immediately invested with the vacant seignories.—*Cron. Nuev. Esp. Cap.* 155.

the belief that should he undertake to possess himself of the country, the whole force would be required to oppose him. After having disposed of the Adelantado, although a great expense would be incurred for the pay of soldiers and mariners, and to procure supplies for the ships and the troops that were to sail in them, yet it appeared to me of so great importance to your Majesty's service, that I pursued the enterprise which had been commenced, and purchased more ships than I already had, making in all five large ships and a brigantine; and I raised four hundred men, who were provided with artillery, munitions, arms, victuals, and every thing else necessary for them. I also sent two agents to the island of Cuba with 8000 pesos of gold, to purchase horses and provisions, both for the first voyage, and to be in readiness for loading the ships on their return from the expedition, so that the objects of it might not fail of accomplishment for the want of any thing, as well as to avoid oppressing the natives by requiring supplies of them; that we might even have it in our power to bestow on them what we should take with us rather than deprive them of what they possessed. Thus the expedition departed from the port of San Juan de Chalchiqueca,* on the 11th of January, 1524, having to touch at the Havana, the place on the island of Cuba where they were to obtain the supplies that were wanting, especially horses, and for the ships to rendezvous, in order to proceed together with the blessing of God from thence to the place of their destination. On reaching the first port in the country to which the expedition was sent, they were to disembark men, horses, provisions and every thing else, and seek the most favorable site that offered, to be fortified with

* The Indian name of the present Vera Cruz.

artillery, (of which they took a great deal of the best kind,) and for the settlement of a colony. They were then to despatch at once three of the larger ships to the port of Trinidad in the island of Cuba, as most conveniently situated on their route, and where an agent was to be left to get ready a cargo of such things as they required, for which the captain should send. The smaller ships and the brigantine with the principal pilot and a cousin of mine named Diego Hurtado, for captain, were to run along the coast of the Bay of Ascension in quest of the strait that was believed to be there, and to remain until they had explored every part of it; and in case they discovered the strait, they should return to the place where captain Cristobal Dolid was, and from thence despatch one of the ships to me with an account of the discovery, and all the information Cristobal Dolid might have acquired concerning the country, and also the occurrences of the expedition; in order that I might be able to forward a full report thereof to your Catholic Majesty.

I also stated that I had prepared to send a party under the command of Pedro de Alvarado to the cities of Uclaclan [Utlatlan] and Guatemala, of which I have made mention above, and to some other provinces concerning which I had received information, that were situated farther up the coast than the former; this proposed expedition was also suspended by the arrival of the Adelantado Francisco de Garay. But as I had already been at much expense, both in horses, arms, artillery and munitions, and in advancing their pay to the men; and as I believed that the service of God our Lord and your sacred Majesty would be promoted by it, since from the information I had received I had reason to think we

should discover lands of extraordinary richness and extent, inhabited by many different people; I therefore resolved to adhere to my original purpose, and besides availing myself of the provision before made for the expedition, I re-appointed Pedro de Alvarado to command it; whom I accordingly despatched fram this city on the sixth of December, 1523. He took with him one hundred and twenty cavaliers, making with the led horses one hundred and sixty horses in all; and three hundred foot, including one hundred and thirty bowmen and musketeers; together with four pieces of artillery and a large quantity of powder and other munitions of war. He was accompanied by several of the principal natives, both of this city and other neighboring cities, who were followed by their people, but not in great numbers, on account of the extensive route of the expedition.

I received news of them when they had reached the province of Tecuantepeque, in good condition, on the twelfth of January; may it please our Lord to guide them all in the way to promote his service; for I believe fully, that being devoted to his service, and acting in the name of your imperial Majesty, they cannot fail to have good success. I also charged Pedro de Alvarado to take especial care to draw up a full and particular account of whatever should occur, that I might transmit it to your Highness. I consider it certain, according to the information I have concerning the country and its configuration, that Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal Dolid will meet, unless the strait divides them. Many journeys would have been made to that country, and I should have acquired much knowledge of it, had not the disturbances occasioned by the arrival of armadas prevented. I assure your sacred Majesty that, owing to this cause, great in-

jury has arisen to the royal service, as well in our not being able to prosecute the discovery of many countries, as in having failed to amass for the royal exchequer large amounts of gold and pearls ; but henceforth, if I have no more difficulties of a similar character to contend with, I shall labor to restore what has been lost ; for I shall not spare any personal exertions, nor hesitate to expend my own private means, for the accomplishment of this object. And I assure your imperial and sacred Majesty, that besides having expended all that I possessed, I owe your Majesty for the rents that I have applied to these charges, as will appear when the accounts are rendered to your Majesty, more than sixty thousand pesos of gold, exclusive of twelve thousand more which I have borrowed from several persons for my domestic expenses.

I have mentioned in a former place that some of the provinces adjacent to Espiritu Santo, and those tributary to that colony, had rebelled, and even taken the lives of several Spaniards ; and that for the purpose of reducing them to the royal service of your Majesty, as well as to lead others to embrace it, the people in that colony not being adequate to the undertaking, I had sent thither a captain with thirty horse and a hundred foot, some of whom were bowmen and musketeers, with two pieces of artillery, and a sufficient supply of munitions and powder ; who accordingly took up the line of march on the eighth of December, 1523. Up to the present time I have had no accounts from them ; but I think great advantages will be derived from that quarter to the service of God our Lord and your Majesty, and that valuable discoveries will be made ; for it is a section of country that lies between the conquests of Pedro de Alvarado and those of Cristobal Dolid ; and that part of

it lying towards the North Sea, which is of small extent, has been of a pacific character until lately, and in the quiet possession of your Majesty by conquest. When this is reduced, there will be more than four hundred leagues of uninterrupted territory subject to the royal service in the north, and more than five hundred leagues in the south, extending from one sea to the other; all of which is undisturbed in its allegiance, excepting two provinces, situated in the midst of Teguantepeque, Chinanta, Guaxaca, and Guazaqualco, by which four provinces they are bounded on all sides. The inhabitants of these two districts are called Zaputecas and Mixes, who occupy a country so rough in its character that it is impossible to penetrate it even on foot; nevertheless I made two attempts to conquer them, but without success. They are defended by strong fortresses, a mountainous region, and substantial weapons; they fight with lances from twenty-five to thirty palms in length, very stout and well made, pointed with flint. In defending themselves they killed a number of Spaniards; and they are constantly doing mischief to their neighbors who are vassals of your Majesty, attacking and burning their villages by night, and murdering the inhabitants; and many of the adjoining districts have been induced to throw off their allegiance and become their confederates. As I had made so little progress against them, although I had no men to spare, so many having gone on different expeditions, I mustered one hundred and fifty foot, (the cavalry not being able to manœuvre in that region,) consisting for the most part of bowmen and musketeers, together with four pieces of artillery and the necessary munitions, the bowmen and musketeers being provided in the most liberal manner. I placed this force under

the command of Rodrigo Rangel, alcalde of this city, who went on a similar expedition against the same people a year ago, but on account of its being the rainy season was unable to effect any thing, and returned after an absence of two months. This captain set out with his party on the fifth of February of the present year, [1524]; and I trust that by the favor of God, having a good force, and going at a favorable season, accompanied by a large number of native warriors, skilled in arms, both of this city and its vicinity, success will attend him; from which no little service will redound to the imperial crown of your Highness, as the people in question not only refuse allegiance, but annoy those who are well disposed towards us. The country is also very rich in mines of gold; and the neighboring people say that when they are reduced they will go and take their gold from them, on account of their having been so rebellious; although often required to yield obedience, and having on one occasion even offered themselves as vassals of your Highness, they had yet killed several Spaniards, and committed so much mischief, that they deserved to be made slaves. I therefore ordered that those who were taken alive should be marked with the brand of your Highness, and after setting apart the number appertaining to your Majesty, the rest should be distributed amongst their conquerors. Your royal Excellency may consider it certain that the smallest of these expeditions which have just been fitted out has cost me more than 5000 pesos of gold; and that the two under Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal Dolid have cost me more than 50,000 pesos in money, without reckoning other charges on my estates, which are not carried to the account. But should all this tend to ad-

vance the service of your imperial Majesty, I shall consider it a sufficient recompense, even if it require also a sacrifice of my life, which shall ever be at your Majesty's disposal.

Both in a former despatch, and in the present one, I have made mention to your Highness of four ships, which I had commenced building on the South Sea; and as it is a long time since the work was commenced, it may appear to your royal Highness that I have been somewhat dilatory in not having them completed up to the present time; I owe your sacred Majesty, therefore, some explanation of the delay. One cause is that the South Sea, at least that part of it where these ships are building, is two hundred leagues and more distant from the ports of the North Sea, where every thing is landed that comes into New Spain; and the route is in part by mountain passes, and across large and full rivers; and as all the materials necessary in building must be brought from thence, there being no other way to obtain them, the transportation which I have caused to be made is attended with much difficulty. Add to this, that the house at the port where the ships are building, which contained all the requisite materials, such as sails, cables, rigging, nails, anchors, pitch, slush, oakum, tar, oil, &c., one night was set on fire, and every thing consumed except what was incapable of being burnt. I am now employed in collecting my materials anew; for a vessel arrived here four months ago from Castile, bringing me every thing necessary for completing the ships, for which I had sent, fearing that some accident might happen. I assure your imperial Majesty that these ships, although they have not touched the water, have cost me more than 8000 pesos of gold beside extra expenses; but, praise to

our Lord, they are in such a state that they will be ready to sail on the first day of Pentecost, or St. John's day in June, if we should have a sufficient supply of tar; all that I had before was destroyed by the fire, and I have not yet been able to replace it; but I expect before that time to have some brought from those districts from which I have made arrangements to have it sent to me. To these ships I attach an importance I am unable to express; for I consider it certain that by means of them, if it please God our Lord, your imperial Majesty will become lord of more realms and states in these parts than there exists any knowledge of in our nation to the present time; and that if it please God to guide your Majesty to the attainment of this great object, I believe nothing more will be wanting to make your Highness monarch of the world.

CHAPTER V.

Although it has pleased God our Lord that this great city of Temixtitan should fall into our hands, it seemed best to me not to reside in it for the present,on account of many inconveniences; and I removed with all our people to thet own of Cuyuacan, situated on the coast of the lake, of which I have made mention. But as I always desired that this city should be rebuilt, in consequence of its grandeur and wonderful situation, I labored to collect together its native inhabitants whom the war had dispersed in various directions; and although I had constantly retained its cacique a prisoner, and still continued to do so, I caused a captain-general whom I had taken during the war, and had known from the time of Muteczuma, to superintend the re-peopling of the city.* In order that this person might have greater authority, I restored to him the same office he had held in the time of the cacique, which was that of *Ciguacoat*, meaning "the lieutenant of the cacique;" and to other principal persons whom I had also known before, I gave a share in the government of the city, such as they had been accustomed to exercise. I also assigned to the Ciguacoat and the rest landed districts and people for their support, although not of so great an extent as they had before enjoyed, nor sufficient to enable them to do any mischief at a future period. I constantly en-

* Gomara says that Cortes set at liberty Jihucoa, a captain-general, and gave him charge of the people and the construction of houses, and jurisdiction over a ward of the city. A son of Montezuma was employed in a similar manner.—*Cron. Nuev. Esp. Cap.* 162.

deavored to confer on them honor and favor; and they exerted themselves with such effect that there are at this time thirty thousand householders in the city, and as much order in their markets and places of business as was wont to prevail. I allowed them so many liberties and privileges, that every day accessions were made to the population; for they lived very much as they pleased. Those who practised the mechanic arts, of whom there were great numbers, subsisted on the wages they obtained from the Spaniards; such as carpenters, masons, stonecutters, silversmiths, &c. The merchants were in the secure possession of their goods, and succeeded in selling them; some people obtained a livelihood as fishmongers, which is a great business in this city; others cultivate the ground, many of whom have their gardens in which they raise all the garden-stuff of Spain, so far as they have been able to obtain the seeds. And I assure your imperial Majesty that if they had the plants and seeds of Spain, and your Highness were pleased to order us to supply them, as in my former despatch I begged you to do, so fond are the natives of these parts of cultivating the earth and raising plants, that in a short time there would be a great abundance, from which I think no little advantage would result to the imperial crown of your Highness; for it would be the cause of perpetuating your authority in this land, increasing the rents of your sacred Majesty, and rendering more extensive the dominions which your Highness in the name of God our Lord already possesses; to effect which your Highness may be assured no exertions will be wanting on my part, but that I shall labor for it with all the strength and power that I can command.

As soon as the city was taken, I immediately set to

work to build a fortress in the water on one side of the city, within which the brigantines might be secure, and from which the whole city could be attacked if necessary; and that by means of it I might have the power to go out, or come in, as often as I wished; it was accordingly built. Although I have seen some arsenals and fortresses, I have never seen any equal to this; and many others who have inspected it say the same. It is constructed in the following manner: the part that is situated towards the lake consists of two towers of great strength, with their embrasures in the appropriate places; one of these towers projects on one side beyond the curtain, and is filled with embrasures that sweep the curtain; the other tower is situated in the same manner on the other side. Between the two towers rises the main building, within which the brigantines enter, having a door of exit and entrance between the two towers towards the water; and the whole main building is also provided with embrasures, and on its summit towards the city there is another very large tower, with many apartments above and below, from which the city can be attacked or defended. But as I shall send your Majesty a drawing of this structure, for the better understanding of it, I shall mention no more particulars, except that its character is such as to place in our power peace or war, which ever we may desire, the ships as well as artillery being contained within it. This being completed, it appeared to me that I could now safely settle our people in the city, as I was desirous of doing, and I therefore removed to it with my whole company. The ground was distributed among the householders; and to each of the conquerors I gave in the name of your royal Highness an additional lot, (which they had merited by their exertions,) besides what was

given to them as householders, for which they are obliged to make some return in the nature of rent, as is the custom in these parts. So much expedition was used in building houses, that many of them were already finished, and others well advanced; and great quantities of stone, lime, wood and brick are collected, which the natives procure, and from which they all build such large, fine houses, that your sacred Majesty may be assured this will be in five years' time the most noble and populous city, and the best built in the whole world.* The quarter of the city inhabited by the Spaniards is separated by an arm of water from that of the natives, although in all the streets that cross the town there are wooden bridges by means of which one quarter communicates with another. There are two great markets for the natives, one in their quarter and the other in that of the Spaniards; in these may be found all kinds of provisions that the country affords, for they bring them here for sale from every part of the land; and they want nothing of what they enjoyed in the time of their prosperity. It is true, however, that neither jewels of gold or silver, nor feather-work, or any other rich articles, are to be obtained as formerly except little trinkets of gold and silver, but even these not as in former times.

In consequence of the misunderstanding kept up with me by Diego Velasquez, and the unfriendly feeling manifested through his means towards me by Don Juan de

* Cortes erected a magnificent palace for himself on the site of that of Montezuma, in the construction of which seven thousand cedar logs are said to have been used; on which account, says Gomara, he was accused by Panfilo de Narbaez of having stripped the mountain forests of all their cedar trees. But he justly adds, that quantity of timber is nothing in a country where the mountains are covered with cedar; the logs are often one hundred and twenty feet long, and twelve feet in diameter.

Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, the board of trade, and especially the auditor Juan Lopez de Recalde, on whom in the time of the bishop every thing depended, in obedience to the orders of Fonseca, neglected to provide me with artillery and other arms as necessity required, notwithstanding I often remitted money for the purpose. But there is nothing that whets the ingenuity of man more than necessity, which in my case was extreme as well as desperate, since they did not permit your Majesty to know my situation. I labored therefore to find means to save from total loss what had been gained at the expense of so much toil and danger, which would involve so great disservice to God our Lord and your imperial Majesty, and peril to all of us who were in the country. To this end I made inquiries in several provinces for copper, and offered a liberal exchange for it in the way of barter, as the easiest means of obtaining it. Large quantities of this metal were accordingly brought to me, which I put into the hands of a master-workman that I found here, for the purpose of being cast into cannon. Two pieces of the size of half-culverins were the result of this attempt, and for their caliber no cannon could surpass them. But although I had a plenty of copper, there was no tin, without which the cannon could not be made; but for the two pieces I had procured, at considerable expense, dishes and other vessels that were composed of it, which though purchased at a high price could not be obtained cheaper. I then instituted inquiries in every direction for this metal, and it pleased our Lord, (who ever protects us, and provides speedily for our wants,) that amongst the natives of a province called Tachco [Tazco] I should meet with little pieces of it resembling very small coins; and continuing my researches, I found it was used as money

both in that province and others.* On tracing the matter still further, I ascertained that it was procured from mines in Tachco, twenty-six leagues from this city, to which I immediately despatched some Spaniards with tools, who brought me specimens of it. After this I gave orders for obtaining from that source all that was necessary, which was accordingly done, though with great labor. In searching for this metal, a rich vein of iron ore was met with, according to the information of persons who assert their knowledge of the fact.

Having thus obtained a supply of tin, I have caused cannon to be founded, and every day several pieces are cast; as yet, however, only five pieces have been finished, namely, two semi-culverins, two of less size, and a serpentine; besides which I have two sacres that I brought with me to this country, and another semi-culverin, which I purchased amongst the effects of the Adelantado Juan Ponce de Leon. By the ships that have already arrived, I shall receive thirty-five brass pieces, large and small, but all larger than a falconet; and about seventy iron pieces, amongst which are lombards, pasavolantes, versos, and other kinds of cannon made of strained iron. Thus, praised be our Lord, we shall be able to defend ourselves; and in regard to munitions, God has been no less provident, for we have discovered saltpetre of a good quality, sufficient for our purposes; and we have the requisite vessels in which to bake it, although much has been wasted in the first attempts that were made. As for sulphur, I have already made

* Humboldt quotes this passage, which he terms "the remarkable passage in which Cortes speaks of tin as money," (*le passage remarquable dans lequel Cortes parle de l' étain comme monnoie.*)—Nouv. Esp. 486. 4to. ed.

mention to your Majesty of a mountain in this province, from which much smoke issues; out of it sulphur has been taken by a Spaniard, who descended seventy or eighty fathoms by means of a rope attached to his body below his arms;* from which source we have so far been enabled to obtain sufficient supplies, although as it is attended with danger, it is hoped that it will not be necessary for us to resort to this means of procuring it. I have constantly written to Spain for supplies, and your Majesty has been pleased that there should be no *bishop* to prevent our receiving them.

After having settled the town of Santistevan on the river Panuco, completed the conquest of the province of Tututepeque, and despatched a captain to Impilcingo and Coliman, as I have mentioned in a preceding section of this despatch, I proceeded, before returning to this city, to the towns of Vera Cruz and Medellin, in order to visit them, and make such arrangements in regard to those ports as circumstances seemed to require. When I found that, on account of there being no Spanish settlement nearer the port of San Juan de Chalchiqueca than the town of Vera Cruz, ships went to the latter place to discharge their cargoes, and that many of them were lost in consequence of the insecurity of the harbor, which was exposed to the violence of the northers that prevail on that coast, I went to the port of San Juan to seek a suitable site for a town. Although at the time of my first arrival there diligent search was made, in which

* This Spaniard was Francisco Montaño, as appears from a patent of Charles V. which I have seen, and in which the fact is stated. Indeed, it is now settled beyond dispute, that Diego Ordas was the first to explore around the volcano, and that afterwards Montaños and others returned and extracted sulphur from it for making powder, which no one has since succeeded in doing. L.—See also Humboldt. *Nouv. Esp.* 673, 4to.

I was employed for several days, it proved fruitless on account of the hills of sand that shifted their position every little while, and overspread the country.* It pleased our Lord, however, that at the present time, two leagues from that port, a very good site was found, comprising all the requisite qualities for a town, as it contained much wood, water and pasturage, except that there was no stone suitable for building within a convenient distance. Not far from this place a lake was discovered, which I caused to be explored with a canoe to ascertain whether it communicated with the sea, or whether boats could come up by means of it to the proposed town. I found that a river flowed from this lake into the sea, and that at the mouth of the river there was a fathom of water and more; so that by clearing out the lake, which was much obstructed with trees, boats could come up and discharge at the very houses of the town. Seeing the conveniences of the situation, and the necessity of some change for the benefit of the shipping, I caused the town of Medellin, which was twenty leagues inland, in the province of Tatalptetelco, to be transferred to it; and accordingly nearly the whole of its population have already removed and built their houses at that place. Orders have been given for clearing out the lake, and establishing a board of trade; and although there will be some delay in discharging the ships, on account of the necessity for ascending with boats the distance of two leagues to the lake, the shipping will be secure from all danger. I consider it certain that this town

* The present city of Vera Cruz is built on the ground adjudged by Cortes as unsuitable for a town. Humboldt, in describing it, mentions the hills of moving sand (*des collines de sable mouvant*) around the city, which he says change their form and situation every year, and contribute very much to increase the suffocating heat of the air in the city.—*Nouv. Esp.* 277, 4to. ed.

must be next to the capital the most flourishing in New Spain; for already several ships have discharged there, boats and even brigantines having gone up laden with goods to the very houses of the town. I shall direct my attention particularly to this point, to have vessels discharged without difficulty, and in the mean time, as the harbor is a good one, they will be entirely safe. Great expedition has been used also in constructing roads from thence to this city, that the transportation of goods may be facilitated by having a better road, and shortening the distance.

CHAPTER VI.

I HAVE already mentioned to your Excellency the places to which I have sent people, both by land and sea, by whom under the guidance of our Lord your Majesty has been well served; and I am continually on the watch and occupying myself with the thought, how I can best carry into execution and accomplish the desire I have to promote the service of your Majesty. Nothing seems to remain but to explore the coast lying between the river Panuco and Florida, the latter being the country discovered by the Adelantado Juan Ponce de Leon; and then the northern coast of Florida as far as the Bacallaos;* because it is considered certain that there is a strait on that coast which leads into the South Sea. If this should be found, it appears to me that it will come out near the archipelago, which Magallanes by order of your Highness has discovered, according to a chart I have, showing its situation. In that case the navigation from the Spice islands to these dominions of your Majesty will be rendered favorable and short, so much so that the distance will be two thirds less than at present; and there will be no risk or danger to ships going and returning, because their course will always lie within the dominions of your Majesty, and whenever there is a necessity for repairs, they can seek a harbor at any point of the voyage in the territories of your Highness.

* That is, the entire coast of the present United States and British America to Newfoundland, then almost wholly unexplored.

Considering the great advantages that will result to your Majesty from this enterprise, although I have incurred great expenses, and am harassed by the extent of my debts, contracted in fitting out expeditions by sea and land, and procuring ammunition and cannon for this city and various other places to which they are sent by me, and additional sources of expense are constantly occurring, every thing being done at my own charge; and whatever is wanted is so excessively dear, that notwithstanding the country is rich, the interest I have in it is inadequate to the great expenditure required—yet after all, from a regard to the considerations already suggested, and making every obstacle that presents itself yield to necessity, I have determined to send three caravels and two brigantines to accomplish this object, although I assure your Majesty, I shall have to borrow money to enable me to do it. The enterprise will cost me more than 10,000 pesos of gold; but if the strait is discovered, it will be of more signal advantage to your Majesty than any thing I have yet achieved; and if that discovery is not made, it is possible that others will be, of rich and widely spread lands, tending to promote the interests of your Majesty, and greatly enlarging the number of realms and seignories already subject to your royal crown. It will also be useful to know that such a strait does not exist, so that attention may be paid to devising means for securing the greatest possible benefit from the spice-countries, and others in their neighborhood; an object for the accomplishment of which I offer my services to your Highness, should you be pleased to command them; so that without the strait I shall cause your Majesty's affairs to be greatly advanced, and at a diminished expense. But may it please our Lord to crown this enterprise with

success by the discovery of the strait! A consummation the most desirable, and in which I have the greatest confidence, since nothing can be denied to the good fortune of your Majesty, and on my part no efforts, attention, or zeal will be spared in the undertaking.

I also propose to get ready the ships I have had built on the South Sea, so that if it please our Lord, they may sail at the expiration of the month of July, in this year, 1524, on a voyage down the coast in quest of the same strait; since if it exists, it must be discovered by those on the South Sea, as well as the others on the North Sea, for the former will run along the coast until they either find the strait, or reach the land discovered by Magallanes; and the latter will proceed to the north, as I have stated, until they arrive at the Bacallaos. Thus on the one side or the other, I shall not fail to ascertain the truth. I assure your Majesty, that according to the information I have of the lands situated on the upper coasts of the South Sea, it would be of great service to myself, and likewise to your Majesty, to send these ships in that direction; but being well aware of the great desire of your Majesty to know concerning the supposed strait, and of the great advantage the crown would derive from its discovery, I have laid aside all other schemes more obviously tending to promote my interests in order to pursue this object alone: May our Lord so guide me, that his service may be advanced and the desires of your Majesty accomplished, while at the same time my own wishes of rendering good service are gratified.

The commissioners sent by your Majesty to take an account of the royal revenue and domain have arrived, and commenced the examination of the returns made by

the officers who previously had charge of this business, having been designated by me for this purpose in the name of your Highness. But since these commissioners will render a statement of the care that has been exercised in all these matters, I shall not stop to do more than submit to your Majesty's judgment on their report, which I trust will exhibit evidence of the solicitude and zeal that I have ever manifested in whatever relates to the royal service; for although the occupations of war and the reduction of this land have employed me to an extent of which the results may serve to convey some idea, I have not on that account forgotten to take especial care in collecting and securing the greatest possible amount of revenue to your Majesty. As by the account which the commissioners transmit to your imperial Majesty, it appears that I have expended of the royal income about sixty-two thousand pesos of gold, in matters connected with the pacification of these parts and the extension of your Majesty's dominions, it is proper your Highness should know that it could not have been otherwise; for when I began to draw upon those revenues, I had nothing left of my own, and was even indebted more than thirty thousand pesos of gold, that I had borrowed of several persons; so that I was compelled to resort to that source in order to provide what the royal service necessarily demanded, as well as my own wants. But I doubt not that the proceeds resulting from this expenditure will yield a profit of more than one thousand per centum.* Since the commissioners have not credited me with the service rendered, because they say their

* "Rather," says Lorenzana, "*millions upon millions for one*," when all the wealth that has flowed into Spain from the acquisitions of Cortes is taken into consideration.

powers do not authorize it, I beg your Majesty to have the amount refunded to me where it has been properly expended, as well as about fifty thousand pesos of gold besides, which I have taken from my own means, or borrowed from my friends; for if this is not done, I shall be unable to reimburse the borrowed money, and be left in great want. This I do not think your Catholic Majesty will permit, but rather besides causing me to be repaid bestow on me a liberal recompense; since my services rendered to your Highness, a Prince so catholic and Christian, are not undeserving of reward, to which their results bear testimony.

By the commissioners, and the other persons who came with them, as well as by letters I have received from those realms, I have learned that the articles which I transmitted to your imperial Majesty by the hands of Antonio de Quiñones and Alonso de Avila, the deputies from this New Spain, did not reach the royal presence, having been captured by the French in consequence of the little care taken by the board of trade at Seville in convoying them from the islands of the Azores. But notwithstanding I have been much grieved at the loss of all those rich and wonderful things, which I greatly desired your Majesty might see, and which besides being an expression of my homage to your Highness, rendered my own services more manifest: I am yet pleased that they were sent, for the loss will be a slight one to your Majesty, and I shall exert myself to obtain others much richer and more wonderful, when I receive advices from provinces for whose conquest I have despatched forces, and others to which I shall soon send, having men in readiness for that purpose; while the French and other princes to whom those things may become known, will by this means

discover the reason that these countries are deemed worthy being brought under the imperial crown of your Majesty; since, besides the numerous and powerful realms and seignories which your Highness possesses in those parts, so remote and distant from these, I, the least of your subjects, am yet able to render such important services. As an earnest of my future offering, I now send by my servant, Diego de Soto, a few small articles, which before were left behind, being in an unfinished state, as unworthy to accompany the others; and some that I have since had completed, which also were left unfinished, but now bear some resemblance to the others. I also send a culverin of silver, composed of twenty-four quintales and two arrobas* in weight, though with some loss, as it was twice fused. It was very costly; since besides the value of the silver, amounting to twenty-four thousand five hundred pesos of gold, at the rate of five pesos of gold to the marc, the other expenses of founders, engravers, and of its transportation to the port, exceeded three thousand pesos of gold; but I spared no labor or expense to render it in point of richness and beauty worthy of being presented to so exalted and excellent a prince; I therefore beg your imperial Majesty to accept this slight expression of homage, as a testimony of my disposition to render your Highness the greatest services in my power.† Although involved in debt, as I have already mentioned, I did not hesitate to incur a still greater indebtedness, in order that

* Two thousand four hundred and fifty pounds, or about 30,000 Spanish dollars in value.

† According to Gomara, this silver cannon made a great noise in Spain, and together with 60,000 castellanos, sent at the same time, was the best argument Cortes could offer against the malice of his enemies, who were endeavoring to deprive him of the emperor's favor.

your Majesty might learn the desire I have to promote your service; for I have been so unfortunate heretofore as to encounter great opposition in the presence of your Highness, which has prevented this desire of mine from being made known.

I also transmit to your sacred Majesty 60,000 pesos of gold, which has accrued from your royal revenues, as your Majesty will see by the account that your commissioners and I send; and we have had the confidence to forward so large a sum at one time both on account of the necessity experienced by your Majesty, growing out of the wars and other things, and because your Majesty has received but little as yet, in consequence of the former loss. Hereafter arrangements will be made to send every time as great an amount as possible; and your sacred Majesty may be assured, that as things are now tending, and the number of kingdoms and seignories of your Highness in these parts increase, the revenues will be more safely received, and with less expense; for until now there has been no one of all the kingdoms and seignories that did not offer some difficulties and embarrassments. I say this, because only two days since Gonzalo de Salazar, factor of your Highness, arrived at the port of San Juan, in this New Spain, from whom I have learned that in the island of Cuba from whence he came they informed him that Diego Velasquez, lieutenant of the admiral, had held a consultation with the captain Christobal Dolid, whom I had sent to establish a colony in Hibueras, [Honduras,] in the name of your Majesty; and that they had agreed to excite an insurrection in the country in favor of Diego Velasquez. When I considered the wickedness of the attempt, and its injurious effect upon the service of your Majesty, I

was unable to credit it; although, on the other hand, recollecting the artifices by means of which Diego Velasquez has always sought to injure and embarrass me, even, when he could do nothing else, laboring to prevent people from coming into these parts—I was induced to believe it to be true. As he rules that island, he seizes upon those who go there from this country, oppresses them in various ways, and deprives them of much of what they carry with them; after being subjected to a sort of trial, they do and say whatever he requires of them, in order to get out of his power. I shall inform myself of the truth of this matter, and if I find it to be as represented, I propose to send for Diego Velasquez, place him under arrest, and have him carried a prisoner to your Majesty; since by striking at this man, who is the root of all these evils, the branches will wither, and I shall be able with greater freedom to complete the services I have begun, or think of undertaking.

Every time I have written to your sacred Majesty, I have mentioned to your Highness the disposition that exists in some of the natives of these parts to embrace our holy catholic faith and become Christians; and I have begged your imperial Majesty to direct that religious persons of good life and example be provided. As very few, or almost none, have yet come, and it is certain that they would gather much fruit from their labors, I again call the attention of your Highness to the subject, and beg you to make this provision with all speed; for by this means God our Lord will be greatly served, and the desire of your Highness in this case as a good Catholic fulfilled. By the deputies, Antonio de Quiñones and Alonso Davila, the councils of the towns of New Spain and myself did send to supplicate your Majesty to supply

bishops and other prelates for the administration of the offices of the church and divine worship, and such was the view I then entertained of the course best to be pursued; but having well considered this matter, it now appears to me that your sacred Majesty may in a different manner provide for the more easy conversion of the natives of this country, and their instruction in the principles of our holy faith. The plan I would recommend is, that a number of religious persons, (or priests,) as I have already mentioned, zealous for the conversion of this people, should come out, for whom houses and monasteries should be erected in the provinces wherever it may seem proper; and that tithes be assigned them to defray the expense of building their houses, and for their support, the surplus to be applied to the erection and ornamenting of the churches in the villages where the Spaniards reside, as well as to maintain the clergy who officiate in them. Officers appointed by your Majesty should collect and keep an account of the tithes, and with them supply the monasteries and churches; for which purpose they will be more than sufficient, and a balance left for the disposition of your Majesty. Let your Majesty petition his Holiness [the Pope] to grant you the tenths of these parts for this purpose, giving him to understand the service rendered to God our Lord by the conversion of this people, which can be accomplished in no other way; for if bishops and other prelates are sent, they will follow the custom practised by them for our sins at the present day, by disposing of the estates of the church, and expending them in pageants and other foolish matters, and bestowing rights of inheritance on their sons or relatives. A still greater evil would result from this state of things; the natives of this

country formerly had their priests, who were engaged in conducting the rites and ceremonies of their religion; and so strict were they in the practice of honesty and chastity, that any deviation therefrom was punished with death; now if they saw that the affairs of the church and what related to the service of God were entrusted to canons and other dignitaries, and if they understood that these were the ministers of God, whom they beheld indulging in vicious habits and profaneness, as is the case in these days in Spain, it would lead them to undervalue our faith and treat it with derision, and all the preaching in the world would not be able to counteract the mischief arising from this source.

As the conversion of this people is, and ought to be, the principal object of your Majesty, which we likewise who reside here ought as Christians to keep in view, and sedulously endeavor to promote, I have sought to counsel your imperial Majesty in regard to this matter, and to express my opinion respecting it; which I beg your Highness to receive as proceeding from one of your subjects and vassals, who exerts, and will still continue to exert, his strength in extending the realms and seignories of your Majesty throughout this land, and in making known your royal fame and great power amongst these nations; and who at the same time desires, and will labor with all his soul, to induce your Highness to command the propagation of our holy faith, as the means of securing happiness in eternal life. As for the purpose of establishing orders, consecrating churches, their decorations, holy oil, &c. in the absence of a bishop, it would be inconvenient to send abroad to obtain the proper means, your Majesty should likewise petition his Holiness to delegate this

power, and appoint two principals of religious orders to come to this country, one of the order of St. Francis, and the other of the order of St. Domingo; who should also have the most ample powers that your Majesty can grant. These lands are so far removed from the seat of the Romish church, and Christians who do or hereafter shall reside on them, are at so great a distance from spiritual consolations, and at the same time so much exposed to sinful practices, that it becomes absolutely necessary his Holiness should extend the religious ordinances to us by conferring extraordinary powers on these persons, which may be transmitted by them to others dwelling in these parts, whether it be to a General over all the orders, or to a Provincial of each of them.

The tenths in this country are farmed out to certain towns, although some are sold to the highest bidder; they commence from the year 1523, before which period, as it seemed to me, they were of too small amount to be imposed. Indeed, those who possessed any estates prior to that time, as the war then prevailed, expended more in their defence than the amount of benefit derived from their products. Nevertheless, if your Majesty please to direct a different course, whatever most tends to promote your service shall be done. The tenths of this city for the year 1523, and the present year, 1524, have been adjudged to be of the value of 5,550 pesos of gold; and those of the towns of Medellin and Vera Cruz are estimated at 1000 pesos of gold; but the latter have not been sold, and I think will exceed that amount. I am not aware that those of the other towns have been adjudged, as they are so remote that I have had no accounts from them. This money will be expended in erecting

churches,* paying the curates and sacristans, and in providing decorations and other things required for the churches ; and an account of the whole will be taken by the auditor and treasurer of your Majesty. The treasurer will receive the money, more of which will be paid out without an order from the auditor and myself.

I have been informed, most Catholic Sire, by persons who have lately arrived from the islands, that your Majesty's judges and officers of the island of Española have made proclamation in that and all the other islands, of an ordinance prohibiting the exportation to New Spain of any mares or other breeding animals, under pain of death; which has been done in order to compel us to purchase our cattle and beasts of burthen on the islands, where they are sold at an exorbitant price. This is manifestly wrong and injurious to your Majesty's service, by throwing obstacles in the way of settling and civilizing this country ; and the islanders well know that they are depriving us of the means of sustaining what we have acquired, and of extending our conquests, notwithstanding the substantial benefits the islands have received from this New Spain, and the little use they have for what they deny us the liberty of exporting. I therefore entreat your Highness to issue your royal order to these islands, requiring them to permit all persons to export whatever they please without any penalty or restriction ; since besides its occasioning no loss to them, it would prove of serious disadvantage to your Majesty's interests,

* The appropriation for this purpose was accordingly made, and from the time of Cortes a number of fine edifices have been preserved in good condition; as, for example, those of Tepozthan, Ayacapistla, Tula, Mestitlam, Molango, Cuernabaca, Oculman, &c., which are adorned with the paintings of distinguished masters.—L.

if we are unable on account of their prohibition to sustain our acquisitions, or to extend them. I might have retaliated in such a manner as would have made them desirous of recalling their orders and proclamations; for by also prohibiting the importation from the islands of any thing except what they had refused us permission to export from thence, they would have been glad to allow us to bring the prohibited articles in order to have the liberty of supplying us with others; since their chief dependence is on their trade with this country, the inhabitants of the islands, who before it commenced had not altogether a thousand pesos of gold, having now more than they for a long time possessed. But in order to prevent the evil disposed from wagging their tongues, (*estender sus lenguas,*) I have dissembled my feelings, until a statement could be made to your Majesty, and such orders promulgated by your Highness as the royal service requires.

I have also informed your imperial Majesty of the necessity of introducing plants of all kinds into this country, and of the natural adaptation of the soil to every species of agriculture; but as no attention has hitherto been paid to this matter, I renew my request to your Majesty, from its future importance to the public interests, that orders may be sent to the board of trade at Seville for every ship to take a certain number of plants, and none to sail without them, as the introduction of them will contribute greatly to the settlement and permanent advantage of the country.

As it is incumbent on me to regulate the condition of the country in the best possible manner, both to promote its colonization, and to preserve and perpetuate the Spanish and native settlements, as well as to plant

deeply our holy faith throughout the land over which your Majesty has been pleased to give me authority as a reward for my labors, and God our Lord to make me the means of spreading a knowledge of himself, besides reducing it beneath the imperial yoke of your Highness— I have established certain ordinances, and ordered them to be proclaimed; but as I have sent copies of them to your Majesty, I shall only say further that so far as my experience has gone, it is extremely desirable these ordinances should be obeyed. Nevertheless, the Spaniards who reside here are dissatisfied with some of them, especially those that oblige them to fix their abode in the country; since all or most of them intend to do here as they have done in the islands, where they were previously settled, that is, to impoverish and destroy the country and then abandon it. But it appears to me that it would be inexcusable in us who have had experience of the past not to provide a remedy for the present and the future, guarding against those abuses that have led most manifestly to the loss of the islands, especially since this country, as I have often written to your Majesty, is of surprising extent and richness, and affords in so ample a manner the means of promoting the service of God our Lord, and increasing the revenues of your Majesty. I therefore beg your Majesty to direct an examination to be made of these ordinances, and to make such further regulations as may better subserve the interests of your Highness, enjoining a strict compliance with both the one and the other. In the mean time I shall not fail to make such additions to them as may appear to me requisite and proper; since on account of the extent and diversity of the lands which are daily discovered, and the many important matters constantly

brought to light, it becomes necessary to form new plans, and adopt new councils; and if any of these I now communicate to your Majesty, or shall hereafter communicate, appear to conflict with former ones, your Excellency will consider that a change of circumstances has led to a change of opinion as to the expediency of measures.

Most invincible Cæsar, may God our Lord protect the imperial person of your Majesty, and in his holy pleasure prosper and preserve you for many years, granting accessions of greater realms and seignories, and all else that your Highness may desire. From the great city of Temixtitan of this New Spain, the fifteenth day of October, one thousand five hundred and twenty-four.*

Your Sacred Majesty's very humble servant and subject, who kisses the royal feet and hands of your Majesty.

HERNANDO CORTES.

* The conquest took place in 1521, and in three years after, Cortes, in this despatch, speaks as if fifty years of wise government had elapsed. I shall ever reverence Cortes, and respect his name as that of a civil, military, and religious hero, unexampled in his career; a subject who bore the freaks of fortune with fortitude and constancy; and a man destined by God to add to the possessions of the Catholic king a new and larger world.—L.

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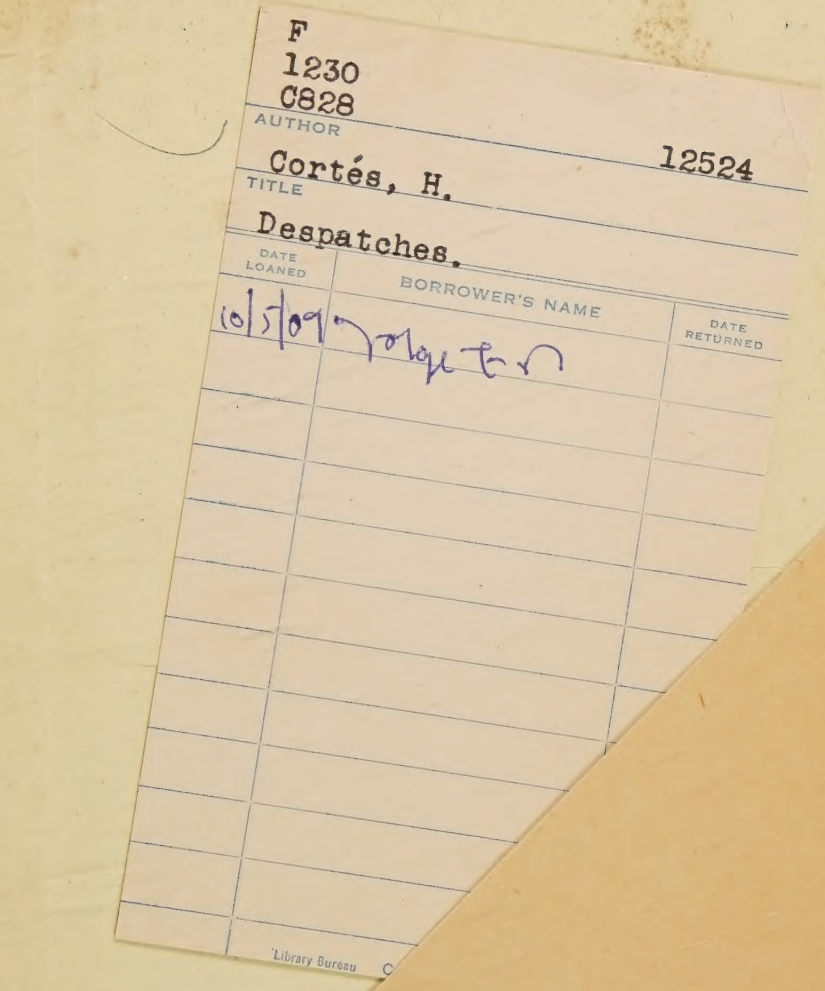
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